The Element of Air

SPRING 2006 TO SPRING 2007

The Witches' Almanac

BEING a compendium of ancient lore and legend — the indispensible guide and delightful companion for adept, occultist, witch and mortal alike ...

shows at a glance the phases of the moon, notes the aspects of the planets and foretells their influence on each sun sign in the astrological year to come ...

contains herbal secrets, advice about animals, mystic incantations, sacred rituals and many a curious tale of good and evil.

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The Witches' Almanac

SPRING 2006 — SPRING 2007

Combining the mysterious and arcane secrets
of an Old England witch with one from New England

CONTAINING pictorial and explicit delineations of the magical phases of the Moon together with full and complete information about astrological portents of the year to come and various aspects of occult knowledge enabling all who read to improve their lives in the old manner.

The Witches' Almanac, Ltd.

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Established 1971 by Elizabeth Pepper and John Wilcock

Letter to Our Readers

The Witches' Almanac and its related book publications were the life work of our cherished friend and colleague, Elizabeth Pepper Da Costa. Elizabeth made clear her wish to keep the publications going in smooth continuity. To that end she entrusted the company to managing editor and longtime friend S.A. Theitic.

When Elizabeth passed away in July, the staff was attempting to assimilate grief while the pressure of another deadline loomed. Work on the Almanac begins each year in August and proceeds at a brisk pace until the deadline for the printer in November. Staff personnel arrive at the office as needed. Elizabeth chose the art, mostly rare medieval woodcuts, did a certain amount of writing, and assigned other pieces. Texts arrived from writers, passed to copy editors. In November printed page proofs appeared, the last chance for proofreading. Once the final pages were off to the printer, Elizabeth turned her attention to book publications. She worked with enormous joy and gusto seven days a week, year in and year out. The company has produced eleven books, and more are in the planning stage.

The new publisher/executive editor is abundantly qualified to maintain the unique format and excellence of the publications. Theitic is an adept, with an encyclopedic knowledge of witchcraft and occult matters, especially astrology and ceremonial magic. He also offers a track record of twenty-five years of successful experience as a business consultant. Theitic is in place to carry on the work, supported by a staff of Almanac colleagues on board for the long haul and devoted to the spirit of the company. We hope that you enjoy this year's Almanac, and will be savoring our publications for many years to come.

– Barbara Stacy

Elizabeth Pepper / 1926-2005

In Memoriam

With great sadness we announce to readers that Elizabeth Pepper, 79, passed away on July 14. Elizabeth was the publisher, executive editor and graphics designer of *The Witches' Almanac* as well as a number of books on the occult. She was a highly regarded member of the Craft community and enormously beloved by friends and colleagues. Elizabeth, a widow, died of a digestive ailment after months of a prolonged illness attended with devotion by a circle of close friends.

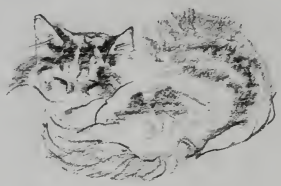
A longtime Newport, Rhode Island resident, Elizabeth was born in Providence and was a graduate of Pembroke College, Brown University, and the Rhode Island School of Design. After college she moved to New York, studied advanced type design, and became the Art Director of *Gourmet* magazine for seven years during the fifties. At that time Elizabeth married Martin Da Costa of Philadelphia. The marriage was a particularly felicitous union, loving and mutually respectful According to Elizabeth's wish, their ashes have been merged and cast into the sea from an excellent boat at a small private ceremony.

The couple were animal lovers, and dogs and cats in varying numbers were regular residents of their Manhattan home. Martin was an excellent sculptor and painter. His subjects were animals, sculpted and gilded or perceived in meticulously drawn detail much in the style of the medieval artists Elizabeth venerated and featured in the Almanac. She was one of the few remaining

Illustrations by Elizabeth Pepper

artists working with etchings, and her classic press has been donated to the Newport Historical Society.

In 1971 John Wilcock, an English journalist friend, aided her in publishing *The Witches' Almanac*. John was one of the co-founders of *The Village Voice*, and for some years ran a lively column within its



pages. Now a California resident, he has been a close friend and contributor down the years. John Wilcock changed her life, Elizabeth often said – the Almanac was doubtless her true calling, and she worked zealously every day, year in and year out, on the annual and the related book publications.

Elizabeth's impact on friends was notable. She was an incomparable source of wisdom dispensed in an unassuming manner, and we relied on her sweetness of character, affection and humor to enrich our lives. Staff and regular contributors, close friends all, tended to remain constant through the years. A visit with Elizabeth was a pleasure, tea and charm at the ready.

Elizabeth wished for the work to continue, and she has passed along The Witches' Almanac, Ltd., to her longtime friend and managing editor, Theitic. He is committed to maintaining the quality of the Almanac and other publications, and brings to the table his own talents and affinity for the company. All members of the staff and regular contributors are still on board, dedicated to keeping alive the unique spirit of the company.

This issue marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of *The Witches' Almanac*. The element of Air rules the year. Ever present but never seen, Air signifies change. It bends trees, rustles leaves and informs us of its presence by clouds racing across the sky. Air encourages us in its more subtle aspect to reflect on the changes in our own lives. And as the quarter century of publication is upon us, it is an appropriate time to look back and examine our trials and count our successes.

As a wise woman once said, it is necessary to embrace our trials, whether it may be accepting the pain of a headache or letting go of someone that we love. Trials are a part of life and can only serve to make us stronger. If we become stronger by trial, we have succeeded. If not, we are destined to face the same lesson again and again until we learn to accept it and grow from it.

Most of us find death to be a harsh transformation, but we need to allow our loved ones the chance to die and be reborn as something greater. The phoenix, aged and feeble, bursts into flames to transform into a new cycle, another generation of itself. We too must be willing to take the leap and go into the darkness with faith that we will grow from the experience and be reborn. Witchcraft is an ongoing study that encompasses every aspect of the human experience, enriching the mysterious quest we call life.

A wise person is in touch with the cycles of life. By resisting change we stagnate and go contrary to the natural course of the dynamic universe. By accepting change, we embrace the natural rhythms at work around us and within us.

Spring 2006 to Spring 2007

March 20	Vernal Equinox
April 1	All Fools' Day
April 30	Beltane Eve
May 1	Roodmas
May 8	White Lotus Day
May 9, 11, 13	Lemuria
May 29	Oak Apple Day
June 5	Night of the Watchers
June 20	Midsummer Night
June 21	Summer Solstice
June 24	St. John's Day
July 31	Lughnassad Eve
August 1	Lammas
August 13	Diana's Day
August 29	Day of Thoth
September 23	Autumnal Equinox
October 31	Samhain Eve
November 1	Hallowmas
November 16	Hecate Night
December 17	Saturnalia
December 21	Winter Solstice
January 9	Feast of Janus
February 1	Oimelc Eve
February 2	Candlemas
February 15	Lupercalia
March 1	Matronalia
March 19	Minerva's Day

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To the Evening Star

THOU fair-hair'd angel of the evening,
Now, whilst the sun rests on the mountains, light
Thy bright torch of love; thy radiant crown
Put on, and smile upon our evening bed!
Smile on our loves, and, while thou drawest the
Blue curtains of the sky, scatter thy silver dew
On every flower that shuts its sweet eyes
In timely sleep. Let thy west wind sleep on
The lake; speak silence with thy glimmering eyes,
And wash the dusk with silver. Soon, full soon,
Dost thou withdraw; then the wolf rages wide,
And the lion glares through the dun forest:
The fleeces of our flocks are cover'd with
Thy sacred dew: protect them with thine influence.

– William Blake

today and tomorrow

By Oliver Johnson

HALF HUMAN / HALF SPIRIT. The fabled Queen of Sheba may or may not have existed, considering the remote time and place. Her era three thousand years ago was in a remote desert kingdom on the trade route between India and Africa, which as part of Yemen is not much more accessible today. But now that global attention has brought a new focus to the Arabian peninsula, speculation about the queen has resurfaced. Her memory was evoked in a recent British Museum show, "Treasures of Ancient Yemen." Writer Peter Conrad found her Muslim name, Bilquis, decorating everything from the first-class airport lounge to a pharmacy in the Yemeni capital of Sana. What is claimed to be one of her temples, Mahram Bilquis, has been unearthed at Marib in the western desert. Bilquis means "half human/half spirit," and even today Yemenis believe that Sheba was born from one of the unpredictable whirlwinds called djinns or genies. The ancient legends of Sheba's visit bearing gifts of frankincense and myrrh to Solomon, who mistrusted her as a sorceress, have been beautifully recounted in the art. They turn up in a tale by Flaubert, an oratorio by Handel, and operas by Gounod and Goldmark. In King Vidor's 1959 film, *Solomon and Sheba*, the major roles were played by Yul Brynner and Gina Lollobrigida.

WISHES ON RIBBONS. Brazilian artist Rivane Neuenschwander, 37, stretched thousands of brightly colored ribbons, each inscribed with a wish, along three walls of a gallery in St. Louis. She originally asked for wishes from her friends around the world. But scores of visitors wrote their own wishes on slips of paper and added them to the exhibit, many writing later to report that their wishes had come true.

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THE REAL BIGFOOT? REALLY? Cryptozoologist Michael Rugg has added a life-sized drawing of what he terms is a genuine Sasquatch in his free Bigfoot Museum in Felton, California. He says it is necessary to note from the chart the characteristics of a "real" Bigfoot: extended heel, a bigger rear end, no neck, elongated arms and height in excess of six feet seven inches.

NESS HAS NESSIE, TAHOE HAS TESSIE: Also in the sights of the cryptos is the alleged "monster" of California's Lake Tahoe, which is 1,645 feet deep. It is the world's tenth deepest lake and reputed to host unknown creatures from the days when Washoe Indian shamans warned children to stay away. After a definitive cryptozoological guide to mysterious creatures listed at least three sightings, CBS aired a program in which fifty people reported glimpsing Tessie in the frigid 22-mile-long lake. Sand Harbor, a popular beachfront, gets 400,000 visitors a year. These days many of the souvenir hunters buy 10-inch stuffed green beasts or a postcard depicting Tessie playing poker with beer-swilling wildlife. The back of the card states, "She has never eaten a tourist."

HORSE WHISPERING. The esoteric art of horse whispering would seem to have limited potential, but education authorities in England seem to think that the technique could be applied to improve discipline in the classroom. They invited Monty Roberts to try out his method in Global Education Management Systems, a major operator of independent schools. The horse whisperer claims to have used mysterious sounds and signs to calm more than seventy thousand wild horses. He lives with three hundred horses on a California farm. Roberts, whose techniques were immortalized on film by Robert Redford, says that horses and children are almost identical emotionally and psychologically. "They are both flight animals who wish to avoid trouble, but will become first bashful, then aggressive if intimidated." After working with Queen Elizabeth's racehorses, he followed up his bestseller, *The Man Who Listens to Horses*, with *Horse Sense for People*. Explaining his technique, Roberts says: "You speak as though you were speaking to the deaf, with gestures. It's their language, not mine."

WOODCHUCKS LOOK FOR LOVE TOO. If you thought that the world-famous groundhog in Pennsylvania came out just to check the weather every February, think again. According to Penn State University's Stam Zervanos, the annual emergence of male woodchucks after a three-month hibernation is because they're looking for love, observing a kind of groundhog version of St. Valentine's Day. Zervanos told National Wildlife magazine that the sleepy creatures take a stroll around their territory to check out the ladies, spending the night with them but apparently not sexually. "We know they're not mating," he says, "because no baby groundhogs are born in early March." The early February excursion by Punxsutawney Phil and his ilk is a kind of speed dating, or getting-to-know-you session, followed a month later by "a week of wild groundhog mating."

AND WOODCHUCK POWER. While we are for some reason on the subject of woodchucks, scientists have recently calculated that – based on their dirt-moving skills – if a woodchuck really could chuck wood, the amount tossed would be about seven hundred pounds.

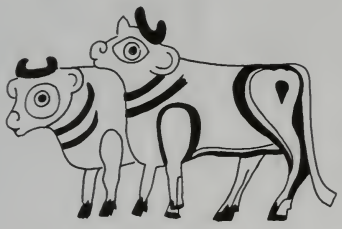
YOU ARE HERE. Archaeologists in northern England are studying a couple of thousand pieces of flint and other ancient relics uncovered by a fire that ranged across a lonely peat moor near Whitby. Chief among the discoveries is a huge stone bearing carvings thought to date to the early Bronze Age and depicting what might have been a primitive map of the area.

WELCOME, APALACHEE. A new tribe was recently added to the comprehensive listings in the Smithsonian Institution's *Handbook of North American Indians*, the bible of scholarship about Native Americans. Of course, the Apalachee are hardly new – just newly discovered after centuries of hiding out in the backwoods of Louisiana. There they originally fled after harassment by American settlers early in the nineteenth century. It wasn't until the 1980s that the tribe began the long and still-ongoing process of the federal recognition necessary to their future as a tribe. "All those many years we suffered for being Indian," says Apalachee chief Gilmer Bennett, who guesses he's seventy-four (his birth was unrecorded). "Now that it might do us some good to be Indian, the government wants to know where we've been all this time."

AMAZING. In an essay, "Labyrinths: Mazes and Myths," Benjamin Radford writes that there is no evidence

Labyrinth at Chartres

that labyrinths are useful for anything but meditation. "It may be relaxing, but it is not healing," he declares. "In many ways the labyrinth is like a giant ink blot onto which its users project their hopes, dreams and fears. You get out of it what you put into it."



BLESS THE BEASTS. Just like people, animals have to be in the right mood unless you want a picture of them looking angry, advises pet photographer Rachel Hale. Last year she published a book about dogs and one about cats. "Farm noises are best for dogs; as for cats, flashing a feather can make them look your way"... Oklahoma senator Frank Shurden wants to revive cockfighting in the state by replacing the razors on roosters with tiny boxing gloves... A farmer in Glastonbury, England, where a music festival brings a hundred thousand visitors each year, says that it's either the music or simply "the spirit of peace and love." His cows breed at a significantly higher rate than the national average... "So far," reports biologist Con Slobodchikoff, "I think we are showing the most sophisticated communication system that anyone has ever shown in animals." He's referring to the computer research that he and his students at Northern Arizona University have done among prairie dogs, proving that the critters have a vocabulary of at least twenty different sounds to describe visitors such as hawks, elk, dogs of various sizes, and people wearing different colored clothes... Indignant California lawmakers are seeking to ban the sale of cloned pets in the state after a Sausalito company charged $50,000 each for copies. "Cloning hurts animals, exploits grieving pet owners and is unnecessary in a state that kills more than a million unwanted cats and dogs each year," declares State Assemblyman Lloyd Levine.

Arthur Rackham

Illustration by Walter Crane from The Faerie Queene, Edmund Spenser

MOON GARDENING

BY PHASE

Sow, transplant, bud and graft — *Plow, cultivate, weed and reap*

NEW	First Quarter	FULL	Last Quarter	NEW
Plant above-ground crops with outside seeds, flowering annuals.	Plant above-ground crops with inside seeds.	Plant root crops, bulbs, biennials, perennials.	Do not plant.	

BY PLACE IN THE ZODIAC

Fruitful Signs

Cancer — Most favorable planting time for all leafy crops bearing fruit above ground. Prune to encourage growth in Cancer.

Scorpio — Second only to Cancer, a Scorpion Moon promises good germination and swift growth. In Scorpio, prune for bud development.

Pisces — Planting in the last of the Watery Triad is especially effective for root growth.

Taurus — The best time to plant root crops is when the Moon is in the sign of the Bull.

Capricorn — The Earthy Goat Moon promotes the growth of rhizomes, bulbs, roots, tubers and stalks. Prune now to strengthen branches.

Libra — Airy Libra may be the least beneficial of the Fruitful Signs, but is excellent for planting flowers and vines.

Barren Signs

Leo — Foremost of the Barren Signs, the Lion Moon is the best time to effectively destroy weeds and pests. Cultivate and till the soil.

Gemini — Harvest in the Airy Twins; gather herbs and roots. Reap when the Moon is in a sign of Air or Fire to assure best storage.

Virgo — Plow, cultivate, and control weeds and pests when the moon is in Virgo.

Sagittarius — Plow and cultivate the soil or harvest under the Archer Moon. Prune now to discourage growth.

Aquarius — This dry sign of Air is perfect for ground cultivation, reaping crops, gathering roots and herbs. It is a good time to destroy weeds and pests.

Aries — Cultivate, weed, and prune to lessen growth. Gather herbs and roots for storage.

Consult our Moon Calendar pages for phase and place in the zodiac circle. The Moon remains in a sign for about two-and-a-half days. Match your gardening activity to the day that follows the Moon's entry into that zodiac sign.

Expectancy

I cannot tell why some things hold for me
A sense of unplumbed marvels to befall,
Or of a rift in the horizon's wall
Opening to worlds where only gods can be.
There is a breathless, vague expectancy,
As of vast ancient pomps I half-recall,
Or wild adventures, uncorporeal,
Ecstasy-fraught, and as a day-dream free.

It is in sunsets and strange city spires,
Old villages and woods and misty downs,
South winds, the sea, low hills, and lighted towns,
Old gardens, half-heard songs, and the moon's fires,
But though its lure alone makes life worth living,
None gains or guesses what it hints at giving.

– H. P. Lovecraft

The MOON *Calendar*

is divided into zodiac signs rather than the more familiar Gregorian calendar.

2006 — 2007

Bear in mind that new projects should be initiated when the Moon is waxing (from dark to full); when the Moon is on the wane (from full to dark), it is a time for storing energy and the wise person waits.

Please note that Moons are listed by day of entry into each sign. Quarters are marked, but as rising and setting times vary from one region to another, it is advisable to check your local newspaper, library or planetarium.

The Moon's Place is computed for Eastern Standard Time.

TAROT'S CHARIOT

Tarot of Marseilles

The Chariot indicates forward motion, struggle, and a triumph that can be won through determination based on unwavering self-confidence. A powerful prince/warrior sits in a chariot drawn by either sphinxes or horses. Typically, one is black, one is white. They will pull in different directions, and the driver must achieve a union of powerful opposites to make them move in harmony.

The card may refer to many kinds of conflicts – over enemies, nature, a variety of obstacles, or the beasts inside one's own psyche. The battle requires a clear goal, course of action, and willpower. The Chariot may also represent a possible journey, either virtual travel or one of spiritual discovery.

The Chariot is regarded as lucky, for the seeker attuned to its portents will prevail. The number VII, signifying the spiritual and philosophical, reinforces the tendency to good fortune.

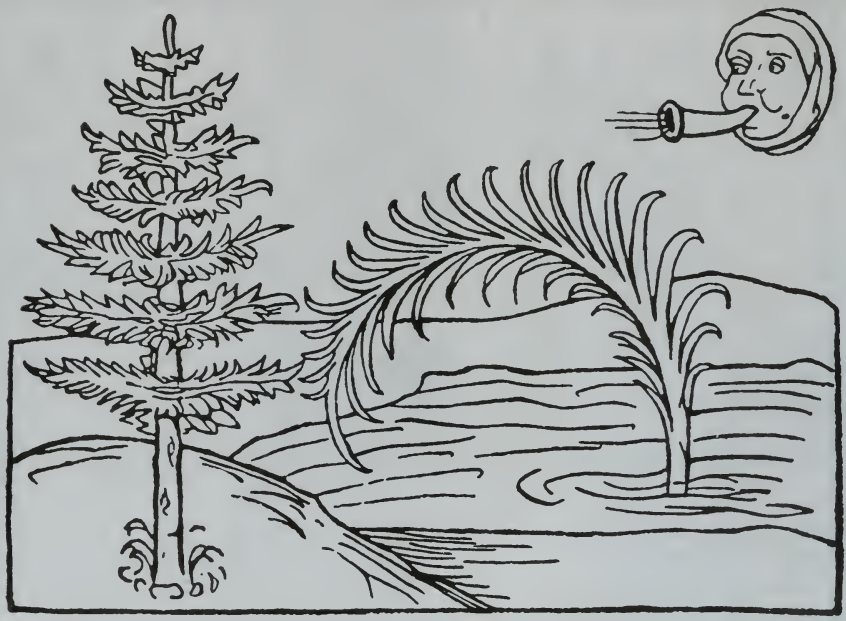
♈ aries

March 20 – April 19

Mars — *Cardinal Sign of Fire*

s	m	t	w	t	f	s
	Mar. 20 2006 Vernal Equinox Sagittarius	21 *Plan your garden*	22	23 Capricorn	24	25 *Listen to a friend* Aquarius
26 *Joseph Campbell born, 1904*	27 Pisces	28 *Contact an old friend*	29 Aries	30 WAXING *Light a fire*	31 *Read a poem aloud* Taurus	April 1 All Fool's Day
2 Set clocks ahead one hour Gemini	3 *Wear something green*	4 Cancer	5	6 *Plant seeds with love*	7 *Billie Holliday born, 1917* Leo	8
9 Virgo	10 *Gaze at the clouds*	11	12 *Enjoy a friend's company* Libra	13 seed moon	14 WANING Scorpio	15 *Leonardo DaVinci born, 1452*
16	17 *Search out truth* Sagittarius	18	19 *Feel passion* Capricorn			

The Tree and the Reed



Aesop's Fables Ulm, 1476

Once, when a tree had been badly damaged by the wind, it noticed that the reed had not been hurt at all. The tree said to the reed, "I am strong and thick, you are thin and weak. Why does the wind injure me and not you?" The reed answered, "I know how weak I am, so when the wind blows I bend along with it and I don't feel the full force of it. But you rely on your strength and you fight the wind – that's why you get broken."

Moral: Judge your own strength and act accordingly.

♉ **taurus** April 20 – May 20

Venus *Fixed Sign of Earth*

s	m	t	w	t	f	s
				April 20	21 *Wish upon a cloud* Aquarius	22
23 *William Shakespeare born, 1564* Pisces	24 *Use a sure foot*	25 Aries	26 *Separate from an enemy*	27 Taurus	28 WAXING	29 *Avoid delay*
30 *Roodmas Eve* Gemini	May 1 BELTANE ⊛ *Dance the Maypole*	2 *Put honey at the back door* Cancer	3	4 *Don't measure love* Leo	5	6 *Have patience*
7 *Lay upon the earth* Virgo	8 White Lotus Day	9 *Gaze into still water* Libra	10	11 *Salvador Dali born, 1904*	12 *Pray to the moon* Scorpio	13 hare moon
14 WANING Sagittarius	15 *Watch the moon rise*	16 *Summon a familiar* Capricorn	17	18 *Seek out a rainbow* Aquarius	19 *Smell a flower*	20

Wind Songs

The aeolian harp is an instrument played by nature itself, improvisations of the wind. Its songs rely on the mood of the weather – a hum borne on the breeze, a shriek borne on a gale.

The instrument, also called a wind harp, is essentially a wooden box holding a sounding board with a hole in the center. Five to twelve strings, tuned to the same pitch, stretch lengthwise across two bridges. The instrument rests on a windowsill; the window is closed almost to the top of the strings. A second type of wind harp is larger and more ornate, designed for aesthetic effect in yards and gardens.

The aeolian harp was designed by ancient Greeks and considered the instrument of Aeolus, god of the wind. He is musically aided by his elemental quadruplets; Boreas the north wind, "the devouring;" Zephyrus, the gentle west wind; Eurus, the unlucky east wind; and Notus, the hot wind, destroyer of crops.

Aeolian harps arose in popularity as household novelties during the 18th century and are still handcrafted today. In "The Aeolian Harp," 1795, Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote,

Full many a thought uncall'd
and undetain'd,
And many idle flitting phantasies,
Traverse my indolent and
passive brain,
As wild and various, as the
random gales
That swell and flutter on this
subject Lute!

♊ gemini

May 21 – June 20

Mercury

Mutable Sign of Air

s	m	t	w	t	f	s
May 21 *Befriend fate* Pisces	22	23 *F. A. Mesmer born, 1733* Aries	24 *Marriage of heart to mind*	25 Taurus	26 *Postpone decisions*	27 Gemini
28 WAXING	29 Oak Apple Day Cancer	30 *Work a spell for a friend*	31	June 1 *Uncover the truth* Leo	2 *Plan a vacation*	3 Virgo
4 *Overcome ignorance*	5 Night of the Watchers	6 *Celebrate individuality* Libra	7	8 *Think about yesterday* Scorpio	9	10 *Draw down the moon* Sagittarius
11 dyad moon	12 WANING Capricorn	13 *William Butler Yeats born, 1865*	14 *Use caution in travel*	15 *Listen to your pet* Aquarius	16	17 *Laughter eases pain* Pisces
18	19 *Prepare for the holiday* Aries	20 *Gather St. John's Wort*				

Mayan Witch Poets

FOR THE MAYAN WOMEN OF Chiapas, Mexico, poetry is woven into their lives as both written language and everyday discourse. Sometimes their speech incorporates couplets, sometimes metaphors, basic devices of poetry. The poems they create embody a range of styles from ancient traditional forms to stanzas as modem as last minute. Among the poets are Xpetra Ernandes, who offers readers a delightful witchcraft charm, and Tonik Nibak, whose voice resounds in anger.

While traces of Mayan culture have been found as early as 292, the Late Classic Period, 593-889, saw the flowering of a brilliant Mayan civilization in over 90 cities – and widespread literacy. "The Songs of Dzitbalche," by Ah Bam, comes down to us from that period, the only known ancient Mayan lyric poetry, translated 500 years ago into Spanish learned from the Conquistadores. These exquisite poems range over a wide variety of subjects; philosophy, rituals, spiritual values, and that rousing element found in all poetry, love.

One hundred fifty contemporary women keep the Mayan poetry tradition alive in *Incantations*, translated and edited by poet Amber Past, an American-born Mexican citizen who has lived among the Chiapas for thirty years. The book has been beautifully published on recycled handmade paper with silk-screened illustrations, the craftsmanship of the women's Woodlanders' Workshop collective.

From Xpetra Ernandes comes "Witchcraft for Attracting a Man," a lovely evocation of her heart's desire:

I want him to come with flowers
in his heart.
With all his heart.
I want him to talk to my body.
I want his blood to ache for me
when he sees me on my way to
the market.

Nibak writes an ominous "Hex to Kill the Unfaithful Man," which begins, "*Let 13 Devil Women, 13 Goddesses of Death/snuff out his name...*" and concludes, "*If he dies, I'm going to be laughing.*"

Different voices, different urgencies.

♋ cancer

June 21 – July 22

Moon

Cardinal Sign of Water

s	m	t	w	t	f	s
			June 21 SUMMER SOLSTICE ✻ Taurus	22 *Seek out a mushroom ring*	23 Gemini	24 *St. John's Day*
25 Cancer	26 WAXING *Listen to the sea*	27 *Gift a child*	28 Leo	29	30 *Drink from blue glass* Virgo	July 1
2	3 Libra	4 *Wish upon a star*	5 *Beckon a spirit* Scorpio	6 *Gather sea shells*	7	8 Sagittarius
9 *Pray to the moon...*	10 mead moon Capricorn	11 WANING	12 *Gather sea water* Aquarius	13 *John Dee born, 1527*	14 *Praise Neptune* Pisces	15
16 Aries	17	18 *Burn cedar incense* Taurus	19	20 *Avoid conflict* Gemini	21 *Consult the cards*	22 *Study your family tree*

火狗

Illustration by Ogmios MacMerlin

YEAR OF THE DOG

January 29, 2006 – February 17, 2007

Overcoming injustice toward the vulnerable will inspire the good fight on many occasions during the year to come. Intentions are kind, people will be trustworthy but might engage in "white lies" to avoid confrontations or guard against hurt feelings. Maintaining healthy living conditions and protecting the environment can be of added concern. Expectations and standards are elevated.

People born under this sign are devoted friends, faithful and honest. They are trustworthy, but will be stubborn about upholding their own ethical codes. A touch of rigidity combines with great sensitivity and anxiety. They require time to overcome vague worries. Dogs can appear negative to people who don't understand them. In reality, they are constructive, creative, energetic, and do much good in the world. If you were born during one of the Years of the Dog listed below, you will be starting a new cycle of growth and opportunity this year.

1910 1922 1934 1946 1958 1970 1982 1994 2006

♌ leo

July 23 – August 22

Sun

Fixed Sign of Fire

s	m	t	w	t	f	s
July 23 *All things are one thing* Cancer	24	25 Leo	26 WAXING	27 *Pay homage to the sun*	28 *Prepare for the feast* Virgo	29
30 Libra	31 Lughnassad Eve	Aug. 1 LAMMAS *	2 Scorpio	3	4 *Waltz with your love* Sagittarius	5
6 *Lucille Ball born, 1911* Capricorn	7 *Hold a white flower*	8 *Say the truth* Aquarius	9 wort moon	10 WANING Pisces	11	12 *Helen Blavatsky born, 1831* Aries
13 DIANA'S DAY	14 *Dine with a witch* Taurus	15	16 *Ignore the ignorant* Gemini	17 *Seek the wise*	18	19 *Honor the moon* Cancer
20	21 *Face east for luck* Leo	22 *Hold tight to a dream*				

The Muse of Fragrance

Incense has gone to many a poet's head in graceful ways:

What is this, coming up from
the desert,
Like a column of smoke,
Laden with myrrh, with frankincense
And with the perfume of every
exotic dust?

You are the park that puts forth
Pomegranates,
With all choice fruits;
Spikenard and saffron, calamus
and cinnamon,
Myrrh and aloes with all the
fine spices.

You are a garden fountain, a well
of water,
Flowing fresh from Lebanon.
Arise, north wind! Come,
south wind!
Blow upon my garden,
That its perfume may spread abroad.

– The Song of Songs, 3:6

In the center of the castle of
Brahman, our own body,
there is a small shrine in the
form of a lotus flower
and within can be found
a small space.

We should find who dwells there
and we should want to know him
And if anyone asks, "Who is he
who lives in a small shrine
in the form of a lotus flower in the
center of the castle of Brahman?

We can answer:
"The little space within the heart
is as great as the universe.
The heaven and the earth are there;
the sun, the moon, the stars;
fire and lightning and winds...
For the whole universe is in Him and
He dwells within our hearts.

– From the Chandogya Upanishad

Look in the perfume of flowers
and of nature for peace of mind
and joy of life.

– Wang Wei *(undated)*

I don't feel like writing a poem,
Instead, I will light the incense-
burning vessel
Filled with myrrh, jasmine, and
frankincense,
And the poem will grow in my heart
Like the flowers in my garden.

– student of Hafis, c. 1600

♍ virgo

August 23 – September 22

Mercury

Mutable Sign of Earth

s	m	t	w	t	f	s
			Aug. 23 Virgo	24 WAXING	25 *Honor the earth mother*	26 *Forge ahead* Libra
27 *Options present themselves*	28	29 Scorpio	30 *Mary Shelley born, 1797*	31	Sept. 1 *There is more time* Sagittarius	2 *Watch your step*
3 *Make a poppet* Capricorn	4	5 *Toss a flower into the air* Aquarius	6 Partial Lunar Eclipse ☞	7 barley moon Pisces	8 WANING	9 *Separation is acceptable* Aries
10 *Fay Wray born, 1907*	11 *Remove obstacles* Taurus	12	13 *Haste is unnecessary* Gemini	14	15 *Bless your home* Cancer	16 *Recognize a teacher*
17	18 Leo	19 *Let the soul rest*	20 Virgo	21 Total Solar Eclipse ☞	22	

Fearless Flying

THINKING OF AIR as an element also brings to mind creatures of the air, including those flashing metal birds that take me to far lands in little time. With terrorism and air-lane congestion, many modern travelers set off on air journeys with fears similar to what must have plagued our ancestors as they set foot on their land journeys. They had highwaymen, we have terrorists; they had horses going lame, we have mechanical breakdowns. Where they had lightning and high winds, we too have the same perils – some things never change.

So what is a twenty-first century person to do for protection? If you have a feeling for ceremonial magic, you might consult *The Key of Solomon the King.* Though obviously this ancient book doesn't mention air flights, some of the "protection while traveling" talismans might still apply. For example, the Fifth Pentacle of the Sun serves to "invoke those Spirits who can transport thee over a long distance and in short time." If you believe that even inanimate objects can have "spirit," this pentacle might be very useful indeed. Make one yourself, or buy one at an occult shop and consecrate it to use. Or memorize the symbol and draw it in the palm of one hand with the finger of the other as the plane takes off or lands. Also plan to fly during a propitious time. "The Days and Hours of Venus" section of the Key are phases good for traveling. Astrologically, avoid times when Mercury is in retrograde and mechanical breakdowns are thought to be more common.

Paracelsus, a Swiss alchemist, occultist, and physician gave the term "sylphs" to elemental beings of Air. The German occultist Franz Bardon referred to these beings as "sylphides," and said that the elemental beings represent "the connection between the astral plane and the earthly elements." Sylphs or sylphides, beings or symbols, you might consider appealing to them for their protection while you traverse their realm. Devise a simple mantra that you can repeat silently to yourself during take-off and landing, such as, "O, thou sylphs of the Air, I beg and beseech thee, grant me safe travel through thy realm." To encourage their favor, before you go leave offerings of food for their feathered analogs, the birds. Remind the elementals of your kindness as you recite your plea for safe travel. Promise them that you will do your best to keep their realm sacred, and then abide by your promise. Walk whenever possible, keep your car well maintained if you must drive, and remember to keep giving nourishment to the visible symbols of the sylphs, the birds.

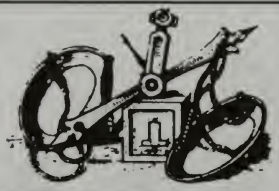
– Morven Westfield

libra

September 23 – October 22

Venus

Cardinal Sign of Air



s	m	t	w	t	f	s
						Sept. 23 WAXING *Autumnal Equinox* Libra
24 *Hold your tongue*	25 *Praise a friend* Scorpio	26 *Dispel anger*	27	28 *Listen to the wind* Sagittarius	29	30 Capricorn
Oct. 1	2 *Wear something red* Aquarius	3 *Paul Foster Case born, 1884*	4 *Accidents are near* Pisces	5 *Beware hidden danger*	6 blood moon Aries	7 WANING
8 *Dispel evil* Taurus	9 *Gather acorns*	10 *Clear your mind* Gemini	11	12 *Focus thoughts* Cancer	13	14
15 *The deceased are loved* Leo	16	17 *Order your life* Virgo	18 *Nicholas Culpepper born, 1616*	19	20 *Decisions are difficult* Libra	21 *Rest and watch*
22						

The Reed

October 28 — November 24

Home from the hunt returning at evening
Pan sounds his lonely note,
playing sweet songs on his pipes of reed,
not even that bird can surpass him in song
who in blossoming springtime
pours forth her lament from leafy bower
grieving in honey-sweet tones.

– Homeric Hymn to Pan

REED, ngetal. To encounter the reed we descend to sea level, for the reed thrives in streams and marshes. Its other names – marsh-elder and guelder-rose – reveal an affinity for Europe's low-lying coastal regions, especially Holland. "Guelder" refers to Gelderland, a Dutch province bordering the Zuider Zee.

The reed reaches a height of 10 to 15 feet, comes to creamy white blossom in June and is harvested in November to provide thatching for cottage roofs. The herbalist Gerard in 1597 remarked on the beauty of its flowers and lamented its lack of fruit.

The folklore of Northern Europe has little regard for the reed, other than as a water-loving plant through which the winds play and may make sounds that convey esoteric messages. But in more sun-kissed regions reeds – slender and delicate, steadfast and useful – play significant roles in various myths and symbols.

In ancient Egypt the canna reed inspired the design of the royal scepter, and arrows cut from its stalk were symbols of the pharaoh's power. In Greece another variety of reed played a role in Pan's pursuit of the lovely chaste Syrinx. Pan pursued the nymph from mountain to river, where she eluded him by becoming a reed. The god, bewildered by the myriad reeds and unable to recognize Syrinx among them, cut several of the plants at random. Out of these, to turn his lust and sorrow into song, he devised the glorious panpipe.

Metamorphoses turn up frequently in ancient Greek stories, especially the theme of maidens transforming into trees to avoid violation. Pan seemed particularly luckless in the sexual chase – according to myths, nymphs would go to any lengths to avoid his embrace. He was similarly thwarted by Pitys, who became a fir tree to escape his attentions. Resigned, this time the god made the best of his loss by cutting a branch and making a crown of fir, which he wore ever after.

Even the great god Apollo, celebrated for his beauty and his musical magic, sometimes failed to win his heart's desire. According to the Roman poet Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*, Daphne became a bay laurel tree rather than submit to the god's unwelcome embrace.

♏ scorpio October 23 – November 21

Pluto *Fixed Sign of Water*

s	m	t	w	t	f	s
WAXING ☞	Oct. 23 *Avoid shadow stepping* Scorpio	24 *Recognize the scorpion*	25 Sagittarius	26 *Visit the spirit world*	27 Capricorn	28 *Catch a falling leaf*
29 Aquarius	30 *Clocks back to Standard* ☜	31 SAMHAIN EVE	Nov. 1 Hallowmas Pisces	2 *Commune with the dead*	3 *Fly by night* Aries	4 *Honor twins*
5 snow moon Taurus	6 WANING	7 *There was but one of you* Gemini	8 *Eat salty food*	9 *Rain may chill* Cancer	10	11 *Stay warm* Leo
12	13 *Walk silently at night*	14 Virgo	15	16 *HECATE* NIGHT Libra	17 *Israel Regardie born, 1907*	18 *Peace by night*
19 *Open your third eye* Scorpio	20	21 WAXING Sagittarius				

Four Winds

When the wind sets from the east
The spirit of the wave is stirred.
It longs to rush past us westward
To the land over which the sun sets,
To the green sea, rough and wild.

When the wind sets from the north,
It urges the dark fierce waves,
Surging in strife against the wide sky,
Listening to the witching song.

When the wind sets from the west,
Over the salt sea of swift currents,
It longs to go past us eastward
To capture the Sun-Tree
In the wide, far-distant sea.

When the wind sets from the south,
Over the land of the Saxons of stout shields
And the wave strikes the isle of Scit,
With a leafy, grey-green cloak.

– Katherine Mansfield

sagittarius

November 22 – December 21

Jupiter

Mutable Sign of Fire

s	m	t	w	t	f	s
			Nov. 22	23 *Boris Karloff born, 1887* Capricorn	24	25
26 *Feed the birds* Aquarius	27 *Favor your instincts*	28 Pisces	29	30 *Divine by fire* Aries	Dec. 1 *Tranquility presides*	2 Taurus
3	4 oak moon Gemini	5 WANING	6 *Scry for a vision* Cancer	7	8 *Recall a fond memory* Leo	9 *Sorrow in the evening*
10	11 *Make wassail* Virgo	12	13 Libra	14 *Nostradamus born, 1503*	15 *Summon your strength*	16 *Margaret Mead born, 1901* Scorpio
17 *Day of the Fairy Queen* Saturnalia	18 *Gaze into a candle flame* Sagittarius	19 *Light the Yule log*	20 **Yule Eve**	21 WAXING *Winter Solstice* Capricorn		

THE MIGHTY ACORN

THE OAK IS REVERED as the strongest and most sacred of trees. One reason for such regard is that in autumn the oak clings to its leaves longer than other trees. Leafy well into the winter, the oak could be identified easily in the deep forest. The acorn, a symbol of fruitfulness and bounty, is a gift from the mighty oak. Acorns are a token from the God. In many cultures throughout the world, the oak and its fruit are symbols of strength and fertility. Acorns, both whole and as ground flour, have become a part of ritual sustenance for many people. But the use of this impressive tree doesn't end with its use as nourishment:

- Acorns placed under your hat will protect you from lightning.
- Two acorns carried in your pocket will bring strength and fortitude.
- Bodily weakness can be eased by facing north and standing with each foot on an acorn.
- A pinch of ground acorn taken in a meal on Midsummer's Day will add vitality to your life in the upcoming year.

- Oak leaves protect against malevolence.
- Carrying acorns in pocket, purse, or backpack will help preserve a jovial and youthful appearance.
- Two acorns may be named after lovers and tied together with red thread, then buried beneath an apple tree. This will ensure that love will last.

A charm to protect against lightning

At the Fall Equinox, take a sunny morning to search for the perfect acorn. It must be found in the sun, not in the shade. It must be found with the cap still intact and with the tip facing toward the sky.

When you have secured the perfect acorn, place it in your left pocket and leave a gift in the exact spot where you chose your gift. The gift you offer may be of your choice, but must be made of natural substance.

In the afternoon of the same day, begin your search for the ideal oak leaf. It too must be found in the sun and it too must be found face up toward the sky. The ideal leaf should come from a different place than the acorn.

When you find just the right leaf, place it in your right pocket and leave another gift. At midnight of the same day, wrap the acorn tightly in the leaf and tie it with red thread. Roll the leaf in melted red wax mixed with a pinch of earth and roll the leaf until it is completely covered. Attach a red or green string to the wax ball and hang it from the highest place in your home, which may be the attic.

Whenever you are at home and hear thunder, be sure to think about this charm each time and you will be protected from lightning.

♑ capricorn December 22 – January 19

Saturn *Cardinal Sign of Earth*

s	m	t	w	t	f	s
					Dec. 22	23 Aquarius
24 *Red and green*	25 *Rebirth* Pisces	26	27 Aries	28 *Become a pioneer*	29 Taurus	30
31 *Youth is innocent*	Jan. 1 2007 Gemini	2 *Avoid excess*	3 wolf moon Cancer	4 WANING	5 *Reconnect* Leo	6 *Alan Watts born, 1915*
7 Virgo	8 *Boys will be boys*	9 JANUS DAY	10 *Exercise caution* Libra	11	12 Scorpio	13 *Protect yourself by spell*
14	15 Sagittarius	16	17 *Ben Franklin born, 1706*	18	19 Aquarius	

The Art of Incense

AS INCENSE wafts through the air, the fragrant cloud conveys treasures of nature and evokes our emotional responses We delight in discovering that various aromas arouse us in various ways. We can call on incense to greet the rising sun with an invigorating aroma, purify indoor spaces, ease troubles, and enhance sexual intimacy, among other uses. Since antiquity incense has been applied for religious ritual and medicine. The first historical remedy derives from Egypt, where healers exposed patients to incense to relieve ailments.

Herodotus testifies to its use among the Assyrians, and the Old Testament tells us that Jews lit incense with offerings of fruit, oil or wine. In Asia and throughout the Caribbean, incense burns in rituals everywhere. And voodoo practitioners have access to little packets such as Cast Out Evil, Blessing, and Look Me Over.

The craft warns us that if the top of the smoke divides in two it indicates madness. Be forewarned.

The following suggestions may guide you through particular usages:

Cleansing. Cedar, Clove, Dragon's Blood, Elemi, Frankincense, Gold Copal, Hyssop, Iris, Juniper, Laurel, Lavender, Pine, Rosemary, Sage, Sweet Grass, White Sage

Creativity. Benzoin, Cassia, Clove, Dream Herb, Elemi, Frankincense, Gold Copal, Hops, Juniper, Mastic, Star Anise, Sweet Grass

Dreams. Aloeswood, Dream Herb, Hops, Laurel, Mastic, Mugwort, Sage

Meditation and Prayer. Aloe, Aloeswood, Benzoin, Black Copal, Cedar, Dammar, Dragon's Blood, Elemi, Frankincense, Galbanum, Juniper, Laurel, Mastic, Myrrh, Sandalwood, Sandarac, Spikenard, Storax Balsam

Relaxation. Aloe, Aloewood, Amber, Anise, Benzoin, Black Copal, Cinnamon, Galbanum, Gold Copal, Marjoram, Sandalwood, Spikenard, Storax Balsam, Sweet Grass, Vetiver

Sensuality. Balsam, Benzoin, Black Copal, Cassia, Clove, Iris, Musk Seeds, Myrrh, Patchouli, Propolis, Rose, Sandalwood, Spikenard, Vanilla, Vetiver

Sleep. Aloe, Amber, Cinnamon, Dream Herb, Galbanum, Myrrh, Saffron, Sandalwood, Spikenard

Strengthening. Amber, Calamus, Cedar, Clove, Dragon's Blood, Elemi, Frankincense, Galangal, Iris, Juniper, Laurel, Lavender, Mugwort, Pine, Rose, Rhododendron, Star Anise, Sweet Grass, Thyme

aquarius

January 20 – February 18

Uranus

Fixed Sign of Air

s	m	t	w	t	f	s
						Jan. 20 WAXING
21 Pisces	22 *Folly abounds*	23 *The center* Aries	24	25	26 *Choose the safer path* Taurus	27 *W. A. Mozart born, 1756*
28 *Heed the north wind* Gemini	29 *W. C. Fields born, 1880*	30 Cancer	31 *Face a fear*	Feb. 1 *Oimelc Eve* Leo	2 storm moon Candlemas	3 WANING
4 Virgo	5 *Build a snowman*	6 *Share a confection* Libra	7	8	9 *Enjoy candlelight* Scorpio	10
11 *Write to a love* Sagittarius	12 *Abundance*	13	14 *Galileo born, 1564* Capricorn	15 *Kiss a love*	16 *Learn from your elders* Aquarius	17 Year of the Boar
18 WAXING Pisces						

FULL MOON NAMES

Students of occult literature soon learn the importance of names. From Ra to Rumpelstiltskin, the message is clear—names hold unusual power.

The tradition of naming full Moons was recorded in an English edition of The *Shepherd's Calendar*, published in the first decade of the 16th century.

Aries—Seed. Sowing season and symbol of the start of the new year.
Taurus—Hare. The sacred animal was associated in Roman legends with springtime and fertility.
Gemini—Dyad. The Latin word for a pair refers to the twin stars of the constellation Castor and Pollux.
Cancer—Mead. During late June and most of July the meadows, or meads, were mowed for hay.
Leo—Wort. When the sun was in Leo the worts (from the Anglo-Saxon wyrt-plant) were gathered to be dried and stored.
Virgo — Barley. Persephone, virgin goddess of rebirth, carries a sheaf of barley as symbol of the harvest.
Libra — Blood. Marking the season when domestic animals were sacrificed for winter provisions.
Scorpio — Snow. Scorpio heralds the dark season when the Sun is at its lowest and the first snow flies.
Sagittarius — Oak. The sacred tree of the Druids and the Roman god Jupiter is most noble as it withstands winter's blasts.
Capricorn—Wolf. The fearsome nocturnal animal represents the "night" of the year. Wolves were rarely seen in England after the 12th century.
Aquarius — Storm. A storm is said to rage most fiercely just before it ends, and the year usually follows suit.
Pisces— Chaste. The antiquated word for pure reflects the custom of greeting the new year with a clear soul.

Libra's Full Moon occasionally became the Wine Moon when a grape harvest was expected to produce a superior vintage.

America's early settlers continued to name the full Moons. The influence of the native tribes and their traditions is readily apparent.

AMERICAN	Colonial	Native
Aries / April	Pink, Grass, Egg	Green Grass
Taurus / May	Flower, Planting	Shed
Gemini / June	Rose, Strawberry	Rose, Make Fat
Cancer / July	Buck, Thunder	Thunder
Leo / August	Sturgeon, Grain	Cherries Ripen
Virgo / September	Harvest, Fruit	Hunting
Libra / October	Hunter's	Falling Leaf
Scorpio / November	Beaver, Frosty	Mad
Sagittarius / December	Cold, Long Night	Long Night
Capricorn / January	Wolf, After Yule	Snow
Aquarius / February	Snow, Hunger	Hunger
Pisces / March	Worm, Sap, Crow	Crow, Sore Eye

– Elizabeth Pepper
Moon Lore

pisces

February 19 – March 20

Neptune

Mutable Sign of Water

s	m	t	w	t	f	s
	Feb. 19 *Show your soft side*	20 Aries	21	22 *Touch the earth* Taurus	23	24 Gemini
25	26 *Examine your motives* Cancer	27	28 Leo	Mar. 1 *Exercise is healing*	2 *Total Lunar Eclipse* ☞	3 chaste moon Virgo
4 WANING	5 *Breathe deep* Libra	6	7 *Be objective*	8 Scorpio	9	10 *Explain nothing* Sagittarius
11	12	13 *Buy seeds* Capricorn	14 *It's all uphill*	15 *Spot a UFO* Aquarius	16	17 *Trance comes easy*
18 Pisces	19 WAXING *Partial Solar Eclipse* ☜	20 Aries				

A New Moon rises with the Sun,
Her waxing half at midday shows,
The Full Moon climbs at sunset hour,
And waning half the midnight knows.

NEW	2007	FULL	NEW	2008	FULL
January 19		January 3	January 8		January 22
February 17		February 2	February 6		February 20
March 18		March 3	March 7		March 21
April 17		April 2	April 5		April 20
May 16		May 2/31	May 5		May 19
June 14		June 30	June 3		June 18
July 14		July 29	July 2		July 18
August 12		August 28	August 1/30		August 16
September 11		September 26	September 29		September 15
October 11		October 26	October 28		October 14
November 9		November 24	November 27		November 13
December 9		December 23	December 27		December 12

Life takes on added dimension when you match your activities to the waxing and waning of the Moon. Observe the sequence of her phases to learn the wisdom of constant change within complete certainty.

Window on the Weather

Many forces interplay to determine long-term weather around the globe. Some are subtle, others more dominant. In recent years, scientists have begun the journey to understand the interrelationship between these factors and their impact on the global climate. Most obvious is the role that the sun plays in determining the heat balance that regulates the Earth's temperature and ultimately the vigor with which storms form in tropical and northern latitudes. It is also increasingly obvious that the Earth's overall temperature is determined by the normal fluctuations in the sun's energy output. More subtle – the formation and migration of a less obvious wave of pressure at high altitudes over the tropics. This aids or in its absence limits the development of tropical storms in the fall and northern latitude storms in the winter. Strong and subtle, it is the interplay of global factors that manifest in the Earth's ever-changing weather patterns.

– Tom C. Lang

SPRING

MARCH 2006. March is a time of tempest with abundant energy to spur storm formation nationwide. The Northeast and Pacific Northwest are particularly hard hit this year. Both will be buffeted by ocean-born storms that bring windswept rains to coastal communities and snow, heavy and wet, at higher elevations. One such storm slams Washington State and Oregon early in the month, while the Northeast receives the brunt of the month's biggest storm around the 15th. Severe weather with a tornado outbreak likely is confined to the lower Mississippi Valley, Texas and Oklahoma. The Northern Plains are unseasonably cold with below-zero cold felt early in the month. Florida is warm and dry with a fire hazard present. Desert flowers bloom in the Southwest, where winter rains have been abundant.

APRIL 2006. Winter's fierce winds slowly ebb as April progresses. The snowmelt is gentle in the Northeast as temperatures warm slowly. Several long spells of cloudy and cool weather can be expected with rainfall near normal in the Northeast. A late season snowfall at higher elevations can be expected. The Great Lakes States enjoy an early spring with above-normal temperatures. Persistent West Coast storms bring shoreline rain and wind while travel through the Sierra Nevada is imperiled by snow, heavy and wet. Florida weather is hot and dry, with more grassland fires likely. Follow severe weather warnings carefully in the Great Plains, where severe thunderstorms and tornadoes will be numerous this year.

MAY 2006. Nationally May brings the greatest rise in temperatures. By month's end there is a hint of summer in the air as temperatures rise briefly to the 90s in Texas and Florida and to the 70s in New England, the Great Lakes and Northern Plains. Severe weather is still a threat, with the greatest concentration of storms in Texas, Oklahoma and across the Ohio Valley. A persistent low overcast can last a week or so from the mid-Atlantic States to coastal Maine. West Coast storms ease with snow clinging to the highest peaks. Spring flowers burst into full bloom across the North. An abundance of winter rainfall fills the West Coast reservoirs to bank full. Sporadic thunderstorms can be expected in Florida, most prevalent along the state's East Coast and through the Orlando area.

SUMMER

JUNE 2006. As the jet stream is a high-velocity airflow that courses through the atmosphere five miles above the earth's surface, it controls the direction and intensity of northern latitude storms. Much weaker during the summer, it generally retreats to the U.S. / Canadian border, though occasional excursions further south do happen. Severe weather will migrate north with the jet stream and will be confined to the Great Lakes States and New England. Elsewhere storms move more slowly and are capable of generating large amounts of rain in the Appalachians. The thunderstorm season begins in earnest in Florida with both coasts receiving afternoon storms. The West Coast enjoys some peaceful weather, while showers are scattered in the Rockies.

JULY 2006. The eastern half of the country will sizzle with midsummer heat and temperatures well above normal. Rainfall will be sparse there, yet crop yields will be abundant after plentiful late spring rainfall. New England will benefit from occasional cooler weather, courtesy of cold fronts interacting with entrenched hot air. The Ohio Valley and Great Plains are quite dry. Thunderstorms capable of producing tremendous rainfall are numerous in Florida. In the West, the monsoon season with afternoon showers is underway along the Continental Divide.

AUGUST 2006. Since 1995 the frequency and intensity of hurricanes generated in the Atlantic basin have been increasing at an alarming rate. It seems that this is part of a natural 20- to 30-year cycle that still has at least a decade to play out. Whereas persistence is the first criteria in long forecasting, it is reasonable to conclude that this hurricane season will generate above-normal activity. Otherwise the weather pattern will be rather tranquil. The usual late afternoon thunderstorms are probable in Florida and the Texas coast. The Northeast will enjoy consistently cooler weather with occasional thunderstorm outbreak. The Midwest and Great Plains will remain dry. An early season frost is possible in the Pacific Northwest late in the month. Afternoon rains are frequent in the Rockies.

AUTUMN

SEPTEMBER 2006. There is reason to believe that the strong increase in hurricane frequency, beginning in 1995, will continue. Atlantic sea surface temperatures remain high and are the main contributor to this trend. September is the peak of the hurricane season. The great storms that form off the coast of Africa are legendary, bringing destruction from the Leeward Islands in the Caribbean to New England. This year, the Eastern Seaboard stands a greater chance than usual of feeling the wrath of one of these storms. While the East experiences greater than usual rainfall, the weather is unusually dry in the West. Therefore the fire danger will remain high there with Southern California especially prone. The Midwest and Great Plains are seasonable with normal rainfall.

OCTOBER 2006. The hurricane season ends gradually with storms, less intense, threatening the Gulf Coast and Caribbean. Elsewhere cold weather arrives early in the Northeast with frost in valley locations by the 15th. The weather is normal, relatively dry nationwide. As for long-term trends, October is the driest month of the year. Abundant rainfall during the growing season will provide a spectacular fall foliage season in the East. The Rockies are dusted by a light snowfall by the 10th, while Southern California is buffeted by Santa Ana winds, sustaining a high fire danger. Florida receives abundant rainfall, quelling the fire danger at that time.

NOVEMBER 2006. The trend toward colder weather is hastened in November. It is a dry cold arriving in stages with snow flurries at higher elevations. Heavier snow squalls will sweep the Eastern Great Lakes with a foot or more accumulating east of Cleveland and Buffalo. Travel there will be impacted. Florida will enjoy a relatively cool and dry month with overnight temperatures dropping to the 50s as far south as Miami for an extended spell late in the month. Light rain and wet snow dampen the Midwest and Great Plains several times beginning the 15th. The first Pacific storms begin in the Northwest early in the month, working down the coast to California by the 20th.

WINTER

DECEMBER 2006. Winter weather arrives with suddenness in the East. Cold air seeps south from Canada, bringing sustained sub-freezing temperatures from New England to Delaware. Farther south the air mass is modified and days are pleasantly cool, while nighttime temperatures fall below freezing from the Carolinas to North Florida. Several moderate snowfalls are likely for Milwaukee and Chicago. Amounts of 3 to 5 inches are likely with arctic air following. Snowfall in the Northern Rockies is deep, its density light. Early season skiing and snowboarding are fine there. Normal early season snowfall can be expected in Colorado and Utah. Seattle slogs through a wet month with a strong storm bringing sustained high winds around the 20th. The Cascades will receive a substantial snowfall from this storm. Southern California receives its first meaningful rainfall of the season at mid-month.

JANUARY 2007. Near-record cold will be felt east of the Rockies this year, with the core of the arctic outbreak felt from the Great Lakes to New England. The threat of freezing temperatures is real in Central and South Florida. Most ocean-born storms will pass safely out to sea off the East Coast. But one notable storm will bring a heavy snowfall to Southern New England with a foot or more of snow falling. A January thaw will probably occur around the 21st, with balmy breezes felt throughout the East. A large cyclone passes through the Western Great Lakes with heavy snow in Minnesota and rain falling in the Eastern Great Lakes and Ohio Valley. Wind and rain will be buffeting the West Coast with Central California feeling the brunt of the month's greatest storm by the 20th of January.

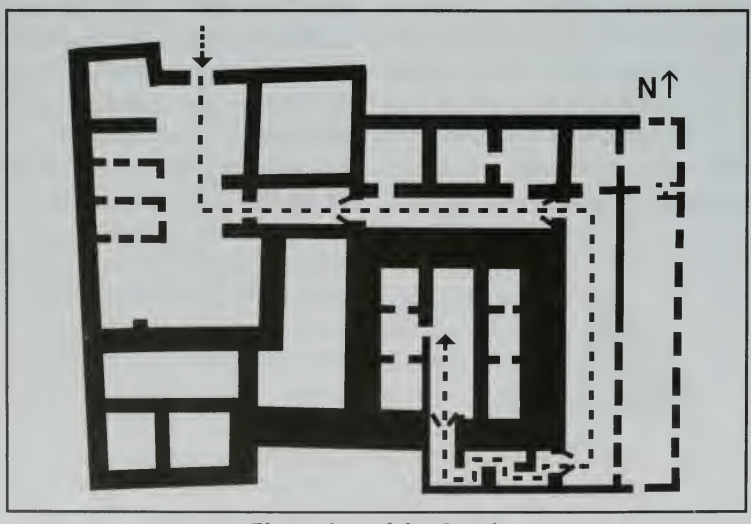
FEBRUARY 2007. As the cold eases somewhat, the frequency and intensity of storms will increase nationwide. Ocean-born Pacific storms will traverse the nation with large snowfalls first arriving in California's Sierra Nevada. Later the Rockies, Great Plains and Northeast are blanketed. Gales accompany these storms on both coasts, possibly lasting several days as the centers of the storms slow down. One mighty gale lashes New England around the 20th, memorable for its deep drifting snow and high winds. Rain is also heavy in Southern California, with snow clogging higher passes. The Central Valley receives beneficial rainfall. Gulf Coast and Florida communities will be vulnerable to a severe weather outbreak with isolated tornadoes possible.

An Oracle of the Dead

IN THE ODYSSEY, CIRCE tells Odysseus that he must go to the "House of Hades... near the place where the rivers Pyriphlegethon and Cocytus flow into the Acheron." The Cocytus is a branch of the river Styx. There he is to perform a series of sacrifices to call up the shade of the seer Tiresias, who will tell him how to return home in safety.

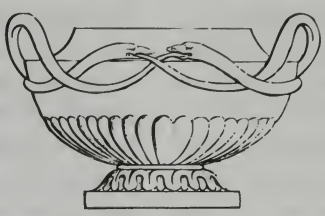
The Acheron still flows in northwest Greece, near the ruins of Ephyra. In the remains of the city we can still see the foundations of a remarkable building, constructed of huge polygonal stones fitted together with great precision. The heart of the structure was a square tower with walls eleven feet thick. Thinner stone walls formed windowless passageways along the north, east and south sides of the tower. This part of the building was built near the end of the Classical period, when Alexander the Great was conquering all the known world.

A few generations later various rooms and courtyards were added onto the west side of the building, doubling its size. Several generations later, in the second century B.C.E., a Roman army ravaged northwest Greece and destroyed the building. Its site remained uninhabited for almost two thousand years, until a small church and monastery were established. The monks did not remain there long, and the site was deserted again until archaeologists began to excavate it in 1958. The principal excavator, Sotirios Dakaris, surprised



Floor plan of the Oracle

by many curious features of the building, concluded that it was not a mere fortified farmstead. He determined that it was an ancient oracle of the dead. The structure was built on or very near the site of the older House of Hades that Odysseus had visited, later described by Homer, Herodotus, Strabo and other ancient Greeks.



On the floor plan you can follow the path of an ancient traveler who came to consult the oracle. He entered the building through a door on its north side, which led him into the newer half of the building. This was where the priests lived who served the oracle, and where travelers were housed before they entered the oracle itself. If permitted, the traveler entered the older half of the building through a great iron-bound door. There, probably over the course of many days, he slowly made his way through three dark passageways that ran eastward, southward and westward along the sides of the square tower. Four additional iron-bound doors blocked his progress at certain points. Perhaps a secret password or token had to be given before each door opened.

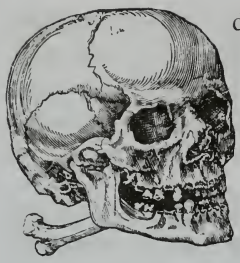
In the first of these three passageways the traveler lived for days, eating and drinking what the priests provided and performing rituals of purification. To judge by the organic remains found during the excavations, his diet included a kind of broad bean and lupine seeds, both of which can produce visions when consumed in large quantities. Copious supplies of decayed hashish were also found throughout the building. Three rooms opened off the first passageway, the last of which was fitted out for ritual bathing.

When his purification was complete, to ward off evil the traveler cast a stone onto a pile of stones at the right side of the doorway into the second passageway and then washed his hands in water from a jug that stood at its left side.

In the second passageway he performed the traditional sacrifices to summon the dead, pouring honey-milk, then sweet wine, then water into a pit dug in the earth. These liquids he then sprinkled with barley-meal, and finally he sacrificed a sheep so that some of its blood ran into the pit. The remaining blood was saved in a jar for a later stage of the ritual. Some of the sheep's flesh and bones were burned near the pit.

The third and final passageway meandered somewhat like a labyrinth until it led the traveler to the only entrance into the square tower. Here he added a stone onto a pile of others to the right of the doorway.

When the visitor finally entered the tower, he found himself in a long high hall that occupied the center third of its ground floor. (Doorways to the left and right led into storerooms with offerings to the oracle and other supplies, but the rooms would have been closed to outsiders.) Here he poured the rest of the sheep's blood from his jar into a



deep dark hole just to the right of the doorway. He also made an offering of barley meal.

In the back righthand corner of the central hall a few steps led to a raised platform, just large enough to hold one standing person. On the floor near the platform stood a huge bronze cauldron, crushed flat by the falling tower when the Romans razed the building. It had been placed so that the traveler was compelled to gaze into it from the platform. A railing prevented him from approaching the cauldron too closely. Gazing into the cauldron, the participant had his moment of truth and heard what the dead would tell him.

When the oracle had conveyed its message, the traveler retraced his steps out of the tower, through the labyrinth into the second passageway. There he exited through a door in its east wall. This led him into the easternmost part of the building, where he remained for three days. There the visitor recovered from his stay in the oracle, and was ritually purified from the miasma of the dead by water and the fumes of burning sulphur. Finally he left the building by a door in its east or south wall and departed by a different route, unseen by any new arrivals.

Beneath the central hall of the oracle lay the crypt, accessible only through the hole where the jar of blood had been poured. It had been cut out of the solid stone, as long and as wide as the hall of the oracle above. Its ceiling was a vault, supported by fifteen evenly spaced arches, which made the crypt appear by flickering torchlight to be longer than it was. The floor had been left as rough stone, so that one could walk forward in dim light only slowly and with great care. This may have been the original oracle, an underground hall where Hades and his queen, Proserpine, had once held court and allowed the traveler to speak with the dead. After the building above had been constructed, the oracle seems never again to have been entered. The archaeologists who excavated the crypt found its entire floor covered to a depth of about three feet by dry decayed blood.

No ancient writer tells us just how the visitor to the House of Hades saw and spoke with the dead. However the huge bronze cauldron that once stood on the floor below the platform suggests an answer. New and polished, filled with water or oil, the cauldron would have served as a perfect scrying vessel. Anyone standing on the platform above it would have been perfectly positioned to look into its clear depth without seeing his own reflection.

Scrying is a method of divination by gazing. Dr. Raymond A. Moody is a leading expert of near-death experiences, who also has a long-standing interest in scrying. He was inspired by his visit to this ancient site to construct a modern apparitional chamber or psychomanteum (as he calls it) in rural Alabama, which he used in bereavement counseling.

In accord with modern sensibilities, he did not employ psychedelics, sacrifices or rituals, but merely provided his patients with a beautiful natural environment to explore, a sympathetic ear, a light and healthy diet, and – toward the end of the single day that a patient stayed there – access to the psychomanteum itself. This was simply a small room with a comfortable armchair in its center and a mirror mounted on the wall in front of the armchair. The soundproof room was hung with dark velvet and dimly lit by a single light behind the armchair. The mirror was mounted just high enough that someone sitting in the armchair would not see his own reflection, but only a clear dark surface when he looked into the mirror. Most patients had apparitions either in the chamber itself or at home over the next few days; in some cases the apparitions were truly extraordinary, affecting all the senses, not merely sight or hearing.

Dr. Moody describes his psychomanteum more fully in his book, *Reunions: Visionary Encounters with Departed Loved Ones* (1993), where he also explains how to use it and gives many case histories illustrating its effectiveness and power. He is also the author of a more general work on the same theme, *Scrying: A Feminine Mode of Divination* (1994).

Following Dr. Moody's designs and his instructions, a witch could easily construct a psychomanteum in her own home and use it for many purposes – not just for encounters with the dead – in her practice of the Craft.

– Robert Mathiesen

Ceyx and Halcyone

Love that calms the winds

CEYX, KING OF THESSALY, was the son of Lucifer the Morning Star and as luminously beautiful as his father. Queen Halcyone also sprang from exalted parentage, sired by Aeolus, god of the winds. Now, Ceyx was tormented by the strange death of his brother and determined to consult the oracle of Apollo in Ionia. When the king's intention to set sail became known to his devoted wife, she shuddered and tears coursed down her cheeks.

"Dear husband," said the queen, "the sea terrifies me, the woeful sea, for at my father's castle I have seen the ferocious power of escaped winds that turn waves into mountains. And lately I have seen wrecks of planks on the beach, an ill omen. But if you will not heed my fears and stay, at least let me sail with you. Then we may travel and return or be storm-tossed together, for without you I cannot live."

Ceyx returned Halcyone's blazing love and dreaded the separation also, but he would neither forego the oracle nor expose his beloved to peril. He embraced his wife and kissed her tenderly, trying to allay her fears. But Halcyone was solaced only when he promised to return, should the fates allow it, before the moon circled twice.

She clung to Ceyx as they walked slowly down to the dock, and bade him a sad farewell in a trembling voice. His crew manned the oars, and Halcyone gazed seaward as the vessel receded and only the sails remained visible. When all had vanished from the horizon, she returned to the castle and threw herself down to weep on the couch still redolent of their love.

Black sky, white sea

Ceyx had reached half his course when Jupiter, in need of diversion, raised his fist and loosed the triple thunderbolt. The sky blackened, the sea whitened. A frenzied hurricane with waves as high as castles tossed the boat up to the skies, then flung it down like a spoiled child tired of a toy.

The captain shouted to reef the sails, but the rolling thunder, crashing waves and shrieking winds made his words inaudible even to his own ears. Some of the crew, in confused terror, tried to draw in the oars, take down the canvas and bail water, but the wind whirled the sailors around the deck in mad dances. Suddenly the clouds opened and the rain came battering,

as if uniting sky and sea. Lightning illuminated the chaos for a moment, followed by darkness even blacker after the flash. Insane with fear, some men prayed to the very god that had unleashed the havoc; others screamed into the unheeding winds; others were mute, stupefied by the presence of death.

One last surge of a wave like a snow-capped mountain smashed the creaking ship. The crew was hurled into the sea, most dragged down at once never to reappear. A few emerged, clinging to fragments of the wreck and howling in their frenzy to be saved. As the waters engulfed his head, Ceyx's last thought was of Halcyone, and his last wish was that his body could be buried by his wife's loving hands.

Halcyone's vision

Since the departure of Ceyx, Halcyone had passed the sluggish time weaving two splendid garments for the king's homecoming; one for him, one to set off her considerable beauty. And as Halcyone whirled the spindle, she burned frankincense and prayed ceaselessly to Juno for Ceyx's safe return. Juno was touched by the endless entreaties for the protection of a mortal already dead. She sent for her faithful messenger Iris, the goddess of rainbows.

"Go down to the realm of Sleep," Juno commanded the shimmering figure. "Bid Morpheus take the form of Ceyx, and in a dream make known the truth to Halcyone."

Arching the sky, Iris descended to a mountain cave lapped by the river Lethe. Poppies nodded at the entrance, and herbs with juices that brought oblivion. No flicker of sunlight lit the grotto, and Iris's shining garment barely showed a glimmer in the darkness. No sounds drifted in, no human voices, no honking ducks, no splashing oars – only the soft breathing of Sleep on an ebony couch dimly visible behind a veil of fog. Where he reclined, dreams formed and fluttered with diversity as boundless as clouds.

"Most soothing of the gods, you who bring mortals rest from cares and labor, Juno sends her greetings..." Iris began politely, but Morpheus dozed unheeding. Again and again the goddess tried to rouse the languid form until her own eyes began to shut in the darkness and silence. But finally Morpheus roused and heard Juno's command, which he dared not disobey. Stretching reluctantly, Sleep assumed the form of Ceyx, exact to the last number of hairs in the king's beard but pale as a dead shipwrecked man, garlanded with seaweed and glistening with water. Then he set out for Thessaly.

Morpheus bent over the couch of the sleeping Halcyone with his tears streaming down her face. "Dear Halcyone," he said tenderly, "I seem to be Ceyx, but do not be deceived. I am merely a phantom commanded

by Juno to tell you of terrible events." Nonetheless in her sleep Halcyone moaned, reached for the body of her beloved and found nothing. "Your prayers could not prevail," said the aspect of Ceyx, "for a dire gale arose, our ship plunged into the raging sea, and I died with your name in my heart. Have no false hopes for my return."

Then he added, "Arise now, make lamentations and do not let my death go ungrieved."

Halcyone wailed so loudly that she woke herself. The phantom had vanished, but she knew that its message had been visionary – that her adored husband had been swallowed by the sea. Hearing the noise, her servants came running with lamps. Weeping unconsolably, Halcyone said, "My darling is gone forever, taken in a shipwreck, and I have learned this from a ghost that was him but not him, a shadow pale as a corpse and still dripping from the sea."

"It was just a dream," said her attendants, "just a dream, dear Halcyone." But the queen knew that Ceyx was lost forever. She unpinned her hair roughly, ripped her clothes, and pulled a dark veil of mourning over her wet face.

At dawn Halcyone fled down to the shore, to the mooring where the couple had said their farewells, kissing as they strolled. "Would that the sea had closed over my head also," she groaned, "for without Ceyx my life is no more."

As she looked seaward to where she had last seen his boat, a dot appeared on the horizon. Unlike the boat sailing away she had watched getting smaller and smaller, this dim object grew bigger as she gazed. Then Halcyone could make out a body floating in on the waves, and as it neared she trembled to recognize Ceyx.

"Dear husband," she cried in wonder, "how come you to return to me like this?"

Halcyon days

Determined to join Ceyx in his watery death, Halcyone leaped from the high sea wall. "Then she found herself flying, beating the air with wings newly formed," Ovid assures us. Covered with feathers she flew, twittering sorrowful sounds as of lamentations. When the bird reached the corpse, she engulfed the white limbs in feathery softness and frantically kissed the cold mouth over and over with her beak. Now Juno again took pity on Halcyone, who knows why, and suddenly the lifeless form fluttered, sprouted feathers and Ceyx too became a bird.

They are still to be seen, always together, flying or riding the waves, as loving as ever they were. Each winter they build a nest afloat on the water, and for seven days Halcyone spreads her wings over their eggs. Then her father Aeolus keeps the winds in check to protect his grandchildren, the sea is tamed, and sailors rejoice at the halcyon days.

presage

by Dikki-Jo Mullen

ARIES 2006 — PISCES 2007

The movement of the infinite meadows, mountains, and valleys of space infuses our sky with life. Traditional art forms portray the Sun and Moon with faces, while the stars are personified in constellations linked to figures of myth. The heavenly facades change expression to reflect cosmic energies, both benign and challenging. Sometimes shifts occur rapidly. At other times they are more subtle and take longer to recognize.

Astrology is a divine science of time and place that has offered comfort and insight for thousands of years. It helps to explain what the Full and New Moons, planetary sign changes, retrogrades, and eclipses promise for you. The familiar Sun sign interpretation apropos to your birthday is the single most important astrological factor to consider. Check your birth sign's message in "Presage." It will reveal your basic direction and show you how and where you can most easily shine. The sections related to your Moon sign describe more about emotional needs and family influences. Read the section related to your ascendant or rising sign for insight about the physical world surrounding you and the impression you make on others.

The eclipse pattern this year focuses mainly on the signs of Virgo and Pisces. Saturn, the heavenly heavyweight, clamps down on all matters ruled by Leo. Jupiter transits Scorpio until late November, forming a square aspect to both Saturn in Leo and Neptune in Aquarius. Spiritual values and economic considerations require balance. With the Yuletide season benevolent Jupiter enters its ruling sign of Sagittarius. Throughout the winter Jupiter moves toward an applying trine aspect with Saturn, hinting at improved economic situations and greater tolerance of beliefs between different religious factions. New approaches to education can become popular, and safer travel conditions ought to develop as 2007 begins. Overall, there will be a wider range of opportunities available.

With their brightness and grandeur, the Sun and Moon, the planets, and stars relieve our loneliness. We have only to accept the message of their eternal embrace to find insight and understanding. Thus begins "Presage."

ASTROLOGICAL KEYS

Signs of the Zodiac
Channels of Expression

ARIES: fiery, pioneering, competitive
TAURUS: earthy, stable, practical
GEMINI: dual, lively, versatile
CANCER: protective, traditional
LEO: dramatic, flamboyant, warm
VIRGO: conscientious, analytical
LIBRA: refined, fair, sociable
SCORPIO: intense, secretive, ambitious
SAGITTARIUS: friendly, expansive
CAPRICORN: cautious, materialistic
AQUARIUS: inquisitive, unpredictable
PISCES: responsive, dependent, fanciful

Elements

FIRE: Aries, Leo, Sagittarius
EARTH: Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn
AIR: Gemini, Libra, Aquarius
WATER: Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces

Qualities

CARDINAL	FIXED	MUTABLE
Aries	Taurus	Gemini
Cancer	Leo	Virgo
Libra	Scorpio	Sagittarius
Capricorn	Aquarius	Pisces

CARDINAL signs mark the beginning of each new season — active.
FIXED signs represent the season at its height — steadfast.
MUTABLE signs herald a change of season — variable.

Celestial Bodies
Generating Energy of the Cosmos

Sun: birth sign, ego, identity
Moon: emotions, memories, personality
Mercury: communication, intellect, skills
Venus: love, pleasures, the fine arts
Mars: energy, challenges, sports
Jupiter: expansion, religion, happiness
Saturn: responsibility, maturity, realities
Uranus: originality, science, progress
Neptune: dreams, illusions, inspiration
Pluto: rebirth, renewal, resources

Glossary of Aspects

Conjunction: two planets within the same sign or less than 10 degrees apart, favorable or unfavorable according to the nature of the planets.

Sextile: a pleasant, harmonious aspect occurring when two planets are two signs or 60 degrees apart.

Square: a major negative effect resulting when planets are three signs from one another or 90 degrees apart.

Trine: planets four signs or 120 degrees apart, forming a positive and favorable influence.

Quincunx: a mildly negative aspect produced when planets are five signs or 150 degrees apart.

Opposition: a six sign or 180 degrees separation of planets generating positive or negative forces depending on the planets involved.

The Houses — *Twelve Areas of Life*

1st house: appearance, image, identity
2nd house: money, possessions, tools
3rd house: communications, siblings
4th house: family, domesticity, security
5th house: romance, creativity, children
6th house: daily routine, service, health
7th house: marriage, partnerships, union
8th house: passion, death, rebirth, soul
9th house: travel, philosophy, education
10th house: fame, achievement, mastery
11th house: goals, friends, high hopes
12th house: sacrifice, solitude, privacy

ECLIPSES

When a shadow cast by one heavenly body blocks the light of another, that is said to be an eclipse. Eclipses carry a feeling of mystery and anticipation. The most significant eclipses involve the Sun or Moon, but sometimes Venus or another planet can be observed in an eclipse. Planetary eclipses are less dramatic in appearance and less significant astrologically than those of the Sun or Moon. An exact alignment with the Earth is involved, creating an intense conjunction or opposition aspect. The transitory darkness of an eclipse is linked to new growth and change. Eclipses aren't comfortable, but they can provide a catalyst.

Eclipses which conjoin the north node of the Moon are thought to be more favorable than those conjunct the south node. When an eclipse is within three degrees of a planet in the birth chart it will stir the inherent energies of that planet. The most powerful impacts occur when the eclipse is within three days of your birthday. If this occurs, prepare for the unexpected; an interesting year awaits you. Solar eclipses always occur at the New Moon with the Sun and Moon in the same sign. Lunar eclipses take place with the Full Moon as the Sun and Moon oppose each other positioned exactly across the zodiac. The wise witch will pause, wait, and watch during an eclipse. It's best not to force issues. Esoteric and spiritual interpretations of the birth chart emphasize the messages brought by an eclipse. Eclipses have an impact during the three months before they occur and up to a year afterward. This year brings five eclipses.

March 29	New Moon Solar in Aries, north node—total
September 7	Full Moon Lunar in Pisces, north node—partial
September 22	New Moon Solar in Virgo, south node—partial
March 3	Full Moon Lunar in Virgo, south node—total
March 18	New Moon Solar in Pisces, north node—partial

PLANETS IN RETROGRADE MOTION

Think of words beginning with the prefix "re-." "Remember," "return," "reconnect," and "repeat" are a few examples. Positive use of the "re-" factor holds the key to making the best of a retrograde cycle. While retrograde, a planet seems to be moving backwards. The effect is actually an optical illusion created by the planet's speed of travel relative to the Earth's rate of motion. However, illusion or not, the impact of a retrograde is very significant. Rules change. A second chance can be offered. Take the roundabout route to approach situations from a different viewpoint. Matters ruled by the retrograde planet are directly impacted. Mercury provides the most familiar and perhaps the most powerful of the retrograde cycles. Mercury turns retrograde more often than any other planet. For about three weeks, three or four times a year, this means delayed travel, scrambled communication, and visits from longtime associates. It's a time to stay in familiar places and to tie up loose ends. Confirm appointments. Avoid making a move or beginning a new job or project while Mercury is retrograde, for the changes will have a lack of stability and permanence. Use care in signing contracts. Retrograde Mercury cycles are wonderful times to pursue past life regression, visit a past place of residence, explore museums, or wander through antique shops. Déjà vu is reported more frequently while Mercury is retrograde. Here are the upcoming Mercury retrograde cycles:

March 3–26
in Pisces

July 5–29
in Cancer and Leo

October 29 – November 18
in Scorpio

February 14 – March 8
in Aquarius and Pisces

ARIES

The year ahead for those born under the sign of the Ram
March 20–April 19

The word "zodiac," taken from the Greek, means "circle of animals." Aries is considered the leader of the parade of celestial creatures which symbolize the astrology signs. A childlike sense of wonder, curiosity, and a competitive streak give you a spark of creativity that manifests in natural leadership tendencies. Governed by fiery Mars, you are self-confident and will pursue that which you believe in regardless of the consequences. To those who don't understand you, you can appear selfish.

Spring begins with a supportive trine from Saturn in Leo. Seek help and advice from longtime friends. Draw upon the wisdom of tradition. The total solar eclipse on March 29 forms strong aspects in fire signs and promises some surprises. Be flexible—the heavens favor a fresh start. Mercury moves rapidly through Aries April 16–May 4. Answers to problems are discovered, and it's a wonderful time for study. Beltane promises travel opportunities. Throughout May Mars creates some hectic situations regarding home and family dynamics. It hurls through Cancer in a square aspect involving your 4th house. Use humor and tolerance if anger or impatience builds regarding a relative. On June 3 the turmoil begins to pass. Mars joins Saturn in Leo to brew some good times in your 5th house of love and pleasure.

By Midsummer's Eve a loved one shares ideas about some spectacular summer vacation plans. By early July Mercury turns retrograde and somersaults back into your home and family sector. Discussions about changes concerning residence and family life can be a focus. Postpone a residential move until the end of July, though. The retrograde influence could make you change your mind about how and where you want to live. July favors past life regression. A meditation on previous lives shared can enhance understanding and cement bonds with a loved one. Devote Lammastide to kitchen witchery for Mercury and Venus are in Cancer, your family sector. The dwelling becomes a haven, a sanctuary of peace from worldly cares. The Full Moon August 9 conjoins Neptune in your 11th house. A new circle of friends is developing. A four-week cycle commences that favors networking. There are rewards if you become active in organizations. This includes community service committees and political campaigns. September's eclipses accent your 6th and 12th houses. A special animal companion needs extra time and attention. Use discretion if considering adopting a new pet. There is a mood of reverie present until the autumnal equinox. Record dreams and listen to the still, small voice within.

Autumn commences with an accent on relationships. The Sun will join Mars and Mercury in Libra on September 23. Venus glides in to join them in your 7th house on September 30. Cooperation is a must; others will have plans and projects which involve you. A legal matter might require attention. You can make a decision about a partnership near the Aries Full Moon on October 6. As All Hallows approaches, Jupiter in Scorpio is joined by the Sun, Mars, and Venus in your 8th house. The veil to the other world grows thinner and a meaningful message from a spirit guide is likely to arrive. You'll experience a sense of deeper peace regarding the inevitable cycles of death, birth, and rebirth.

The first three weeks of November emphasize budgeting changes and management of debts or expenses. Mercury retrogrades in a quincunx to your Sun, impacting the financial houses. As

November ends, Jupiter begins a yearlong passage through Sagittarius, your 9th house. In the weeks before Yule Venus, Mars, and Mercury follow Jupiter's lead. You can enjoy exploring spiritual and philosophical truths from other lands. It's a perfect time to plan an odyssey to a sacred site, especially if it's a mountainous locale. Explore options regarding higher education. December is a promising time to write for publication too.

During the first half of January, Mars conjoins Pluto and trines your Sun. This pair of cosmic warriors have a deep simpatico with your birth sign. You'll be especially strong and influential. Old barriers can be overcome, and you can manifest a cherished wish through sheer effort. After January 17 Mars enters Capricorn and crosses your midheaven. A powerful angular cardinal sign square will be in force through February 25. Career matters will be highly competitive. Keep stress under control. Candlemas rites should be dedicated to your personal image, peace, and harmony. You'll be highly visible among professional associates. Wise choices build your good reputation at this time.

During the final weeks of winter Venus brightens your birth sign. Reach out to those whom you love and admire during late February and early March. The solar eclipse on March 18 in Pisces accents contemplation. Expect an introspective mood to prevail. Your privacy is treasured on the eve of the equinox.

HEALTH

Patience has a direct bearing on health and wellness throughout the year. The March 29 eclipse near your birthday may bring health issues to the fore. Take time to understand precisely what is going on with your body. Give a gentle alternative treatment, if appropriate, enough time to work. Your fiery nature is inclined to leap into aggressive procedures. This might not be wise at present. At the end of November, Jupiter, the heavenly healer, enters Sagittarius and trines your Sun for an entire year. This is a wonderful healing influence. The antiseptic powers of sunlight can help you. Walk outdoors in the full spectrum light and catch some rays. Orange foods, such as carrots, oranges, and pumpkin, can be especially healthful.

LOVE

Serious Saturn is midway through a transit of your 5th house of pleasure and romance. The prospect of a more settled and committed situation can have appeal. There may be a bit of an age gap with the one you love, as Saturn can bring a May-December attraction into play. Love cycles will be promising during August, near Thanksgiving through mid-December, and again at the very end of winter in late February and early March. Venus is well aspected in your birth chart then.

SPIRITUALITY

A highly spiritual yearlong cycle commences at the end of November when Jupiter enters your 9th house of philosophy and faith. By the winter solstice a deepening awareness of spiritual truths will develop. The colors of altar candles and selected incense are likely to be strong spiritual catalysts for awakening higher awareness. Try using gum copal combined with gilded candles. Explore the deeper symbolism in the tale from the Arthurian legends of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.

FINANCE

Discriminate in expressing generosity. With the eclipse pattern activating your 6th and 12th houses during March and September you will be particularly aware of the plights and problems of those less fortunate. Check to make certain that your donations of money or supplies go where they are most needed. An awkward quincunx from Jupiter in Scorpio early in the year will square Neptune in the heavens. This indicates that old obligations or situations over which you have scant control can drain your resources until November. At Samhain a prosperity ritual could help turn the tide. Combine Celtic knot work braided in greens and golds with a medicine bag containing jade and iron pyrite.

TAURUS

The year ahead for those born under the sign of the Bull
April 20–May 20

Careful, cautious, and rather conservative, the Bull's reputation emphasizes reliability. The desired end is almost always achieved through persistence. Ruled by Venus, you admire beauty and elegance. In order to afford the best of everything, you strive for financial security. In Persia the earliest name for Taurus meant "Bull of Light" and showed the back legs of the bull dissolving into clouds and stars. This image hints at a highly spiritual and ethereal nature ingrained in Taurus. Your capacity to delight in the intangibles of sound, color, beauty, and fragrance is perhaps the greatest of all the signs.

At the vernal equinox Venus is strongly aspected in your career sector. Friendships with coworkers impact your feelings about a job. The March 29 eclipse in your 12th house stimulates a deeper spiritual awareness. Heed a message brought in a dream as the month ends. On April 5 Saturn completes its retrograde in your home and family sector. Decisions can be made about housing and the needs of relatives. During the last half of April, avoid large crowds and groups; take time to seek answers from within. The New Moon in Taurus on April 27 aspects Mars. It's time to define your priorities. Focus on actions you can take to change your surroundings for the better. A rather forceful individual seems annoying, but may actually have your best interests at heart. Cooperate. An obstacle will melt away by May Eve.

Starting May 5 Mercury, the planet of travel and thought, moves rapidly through your sign. Your judgment is good and your mind is alert. It's a good time to attend to transportation needs or purchase a new vehicle. Conversations provide new perspectives near the Full Moon on May 13. The lunation activates a Jupiter opposition to your Sun. Those closest to you long to explore and grow. A wedding invitation or other large party highlights late May when Venus enters your sign. June ushers in one of the best social cycles of the year. Affectionate Venus will continue to glide through your birth sign for most of the month while making good aspects to Pisces and Cancer transits. Invest in new fashions or artwork to beautify yourself and your surroundings. A friend might help you with a career opportunity. You can meet intriguing people through your work. At the summer solstice ritual work would effectively bless a cherished relationship.

On July 6 lucky Jupiter turns direct in Scorpio and remains in opposition to your Sun through November 23 while at a square to elusive Neptune. Be very aware of how the advice and influence of others impacts you during this entire time period. Companions can exaggerate or be innocently misinformed. Resist high pressure sales pitches. From Lammastide through early September a trine from Mars in Virgo, your sister earth sign, encourages sports and healthy competition. You can win at games of all kinds now. August 12–27 several Leo transits. including Mercury, highlight the home and family sector. A new residence may be considered. Be patient if loved ones require extra advice and support.

September's eclipses, on the 7th and 22nd, promise changes in your social circle. Graciously accept the fact that some friends may develop new priorities. At the autumnal equinox your 6th house will be impacted by the Sun, Mercury, and Mars. A magical and very exceptional animal companion can enter your life. October 1–22 health and fitness will be important considerations. Learn all you can about preventative medicine. Pay

attention to what makes you feel well or ill. At the end of October Mercury turns retrograde in opposition to your Sun. It will activate a stellium in your 7th house which includes Jupiter, the Sun, Venus, and Mars as All Hallows passes. Companions are in a cycle of change. Legal matters need careful attention but should eventually work out in your favor. The November 5 Full Moon in your sign aspects Neptune strongly. A two-week cycle begins during which dreams and fantasy abound. Seek a wholesome creative outlet and don't jump to conclusions. As Thanksgiving approaches, an 8th house influence could bring a message from the spirit world. A past life regression or literature about reincarnation offers spiritual solace to you as the month ends.

During December several planets, including Jupiter, Pluto, and Mercury, will quincunx your Sun. Recognize and accept the inevitable. Fate seems to play a large part in your available options at Yuletide. Adapt to what the universe has to offer. During the first half of January, Mercury brightens your travel sector. By Candlemas a Mars transit through your 9th house finds you sharing anecdotes with others in an effort to teach as well as entertain. This can lead you to assume the role of a priest/priestess or spiritual advisor during the last weeks of winter. There is some uncertainty regarding goals during late February, as Mercury will be retrograde in your 11th house. If in doubt, reflect before taking action. Love takes a dramatic turn for the better on March 17 when Venus enters your sign. Bid farewell to winter by preparing a special meditation to welcome and honor romance.

HEALTH

With sociable Libra ruling your health sector, relationships can have a direct bearing on wellness. Consider joining an exercise group, health club, or health food co-op. Companionship and emotional support can do wonders for your wellbeing. Because others impact your health so profoundly, you can be vulnerable to psychic vampirism. Avert this by simply refusing to give energy to individuals who frequently disappoint or frustrate you. Avoid eye contact with suspected psychic vampires.

LOVE

Flexibility is essential this year. Eclipses in Virgo in September and March promise profound upheaval in matters of the heart. Your feelings about an existing relationship could change; an old attachment might unravel in order to make way for something new. Explore the possibilities. Above all, allow love situations to grow. During late May through mid-June Venus will move joyfully through your sign, ushering in a favorable cycle regarding romance. The butterfly, always an emblem of desirable transformation, would provide a good love meditation.

SPIRITUALITY

Jupiter in Scorpio trines Uranus in Pisces from the vernal equinox through Samhain. Your 7th and 11th houses will be highlighted by this spiritual pattern. Attending a regular group meditation circle can facilitate the awakening of the higher mind this year. Encourage discussions of spiritual experiences shared by friends and listen carefully. Try toning at the end of each meditation meeting to help extend healing and good will. Nuances and messages revealed through the meaning of names can provide deep spiritual insights into people and places.

FINANCE

Gemini rules your 2nd house of finances. You enjoy talking, reading, and thinking about money. Studying business deeply interests you. During November and December several planets including Jupiter, Pluto, Mars, Mercury, and Venus affect your 8th house. An unexpected windfall from an insurance settlement, inheritance, or investment could add to your financial security by New Year's Eve. On the New Moon of December 20 an effective ritual to encourage additional income would be to burn frankincense. As it smolders, ignite a green candle in a golden holder and dedicate it to prosperity.

GEMINI

The year ahead for those born under the sign of the Twins
May 21–June 20

Quicksilver Mercury is your ruler. You are forever vibrant and mobile. Respected for your bright wit and variety of knowledge, you are a gifted writer, speaker, and teacher. Symbolized by the archetype of the Twins, Gemini finds identity through interaction with others. There is an ability to adapt, becoming a different person when circumstances require change. One image from the Albumasar, a 15th century Arabian astrology text, offers a provocative interpretation of Gemini. It shows a woodcut portraying one twin as mortal, the other as a ghost or spirit.

The vernal equinox marks a new astrological cycle with Mars midway through your birth sign, making you energetic and competitive through April 14. Control anger, focus energy productively, and much can be accomplished. After March 25 Mercury is direct in your career sector. Progress can be made in achieving professional aspirations through mid-April. The solar eclipse on March 29 promises new goals and fresh perspectives. The last half of April brings a volatile square involving both Venus and Uranus in Pisces. Don't let social situations create any awkwardness at work. Your loyalties and attachments are in flux.

May begins on an introspective note; you'll prefer to spend time away from crowds. It's a good time to perfect a meditation technique. On May 19 Mercury enters your sign for a very rapid transit, lasting through June 2. Write letters, make travel plans, and arrange meetings. The Gemini New Moon on May 27 brings the specifics into focus. Just after Midsummer's Eve love prospects blossom, for Venus moves into a conjunction with your Sun which lasts until July 19. Since Mercury turns retrograde, a friend from the past could return. As Lammastide nears, planets gather in your 2nd house of finance. Thoughts revolve around adding to your earning power and perhaps perfecting a new job skill. An item long desired is purchased by August 11.

From the last half of August through September 7 Mars agitates your home and family sector with a square to your Sun. A residence might require repair work. Be tolerant and diplomatic if a relative shows some frustration. By the equinox Venus will follow the Mars transit and create more happiness around home and hearth. A loved one may share news of a new relationship or creative project. Near the autumn equinox a sage smudge of your home will usher out stale energies and allow favorable seasonal spirits to feel welcome.

Throughout October your 5th house of love and romance is highlighted favorably. Attend social functions and develop promising relationships by taking the initiative. A strong Mars trine favors involvement in sports and exercise programs during October. Perform healing rites at All Hallows, for Mercury will be retrograde in your health sector where it conjoins Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and the Sun in Scorpio. Karmic or hereditary factors may be impacting wellness. Examine your vitamin intake and the nutritional content of your diet. As November ends Jupiter begins a yearlong passage through the sector of partnerships and relationships. Gifted and dynamic people tend to make plans for you. A commitment is forming. The Full Moon in your birth sign on December 4 highlights the specifics. At Yuletide others are very talkative; you can learn much from ideas shared at a holiday gathering. Emphasize sacred language at the winter solstice. A group chant, personal mantras, or inscriptions of feng shui characters would be favorable for use in seasonal rituals.

During the first half of January, Mars moves into a conjunction with subtle and powerful Pluto in your 7th house. Follow all rules and regulations. Otherwise, any legal faux pas could have ramifications. Associates will be quite aggressive and competitive. Avoid confrontations, especially near January 13. A favorable passage of Mercury through your 9th house of the higher mind commences on January 17. Neptune, followed by the Sun, conjoins Mercury. The Candlemas sabbat favors study, visiting different spiritual groups, and travel to sacred sites. A problem can be solved through reflection and research.

During February Pisces transits including Uranus, Mercury, and Venus highlight your career sector. There can be some job-related travel. Update skills and experiment with creative ideas in connection with your work. You'll be highly visible and may be making more of an impression than you realize. Postpone decisions about career changes until after March 8 when Mercury is direct. As winter melts away, the eclipses of March 3 and 18 impact your work situation and home life. Balancing family needs with the expectations of professional colleagues may take effort. Flexibility is important, so wait and see how the natural flow of events goes before initiating changes. The concept of synchronicity is at work. Being in harmony with its message is important in assuring successful outcomes.

HEALTH

Jupiter, planet of healing and longevity, blesses your 6th house of health through the end of November. This is a wonderful influence for overcoming existing medical conditions and for establishing good dietary and lifestyle habits to assure optimum health in years to come. From the vernal equinox through Samhain, much can be accomplished. This especially relates to weight issues. Cultivate a tiny garden of healthy kitchen herbs and study their healing qualities and culinary use. Steep freshly picked herbs in boiling water to brew tisanes. These are very healthful drinks, rich in vitamins and minerals.

LOVE

The Full Moon on April 13 emphasizes matters of the heart. Because this first lunation of springtime follows an eclipse pattern, it promises new prospects and potentials. Air sign influences prevail when you focus on love. A refined individual, a beautiful setting, and courtly touches will inspire romantic feelings on your part. An evening at the theater or opera is an ideal prelude to a memorable romantic encounter. Don't forget flowers and champagne or a box of fine chocolates. October and January find the celestial love goddess smiling and nodding your way with Venus transits in your sister air signs of Libra and Aquarius.

SPIRITUALITY

The spiritual energy inherent in the sacred use of language always provides a meaningful route toward higher awareness for you. Learn sacred chants from the Native American and Yogic mantra traditions. Create a wish list, written at a New Moon. Inscribe from two to ten wishes on paper that pleases you with bright multicolored inks. Read it aloud daily as the Moon waxes. By the Full Moon expect to be pleasantly surprised by how many of your dreams are manifesting. The wish list can be kept for an entire year. As wishes come true cross them off, offer thanks, and add a new wish.

FINANCE

With Cancer ruling your financial sector, the Moon impacts money matters in your life. Always conduct business transactions in harmony with the lunar rhythms. Promote and make business offers under the waxing Moon, release and regroup under the waning phase. Family influences and the financial values instilled by a parent will affect you throughout your life. Reflect on these to acquire a deeper understanding of how you can make the best financial choices. From July 20–August 12 Venus will be part of a grand trine in water signs affecting your finances. Be alert to opportunities which arise then for adding to your income and long-term security.

CANCER

The year ahead for those born under the sign of the Crab
June 21–July 22

There is a touch of the loner suggested by the symbol of the cosmic Crab. An impenetrable shell guards the soft internal self, just as a quiet and reserved nature disguises great determination. The sensitive, home-loving Cancer often becomes surprisingly successful in a chosen profession by virtue of this determination. Its constellation contains a greater number of fixed stars within its span than any other sign. Early portrayals of the Crab show one claw pointing heavenward and the other downward, illustrating the higher and lower potentials of the fixed stars and the swinging of moods. Cancers are capable of great changeability and creativity, sometimes to the point of genuine eccentricity.

Spring is welcomed by a retrograde Mercury conjunct Uranus in your 9th house of the higher mind. The vernal equinox favors the study of esoteric astrology and comparative philosophies. Acceptance of the past develops. The March 29 solar eclipse dramatically impacts career potentials. Changes within a profession as a whole may make adjustments a must. The urge to try something new is brewing. Make decisions and schedule meetings from April 1–15 as Mercury is favorably aspected by Jupiter in water signs then. Your choices will be good ones. A romantic involvement with an exotic or well educated type is likely from the last half of April through Beltane. Venus tantalizes both Uranus and Jupiter with powerful aspects in trine to your Sun. This is also a marvelous cycle for developing artistic gifts. Make a note in your journal of creative inspirations which occur near May Eve.

June favors travel, as Mercury dashes rapidly through your sign. A problem is solved, and you'll inspire others with sage advice. Send handwritten invitations for a Midsummer's Eve gathering and include a poem or history about the sabbat's deeper meaning. During July Jupiter turns direct in your 5th house of pleasure. A romantic involvement moves forward. July 1–22 Mars and Saturn are in your financial sector. You'll be working hard on security issues. Revel in all that you have rather than lamenting lack. The end of July through August 11 finds Venus in conjunction with your Sun, forming a grand trine in water signs involving Uranus in Pisces and Jupiter in Scorpio. This is a fantastic influence for emotional fulfillment. Love and appreciation surround you at Lammastide. A visit to a lake, riverfront, or the seashore sets the scene for memorable events.

As August draws to a close Mars squares Pluto, creating some stress in your 3rd and 6th houses. Call ahead before making a short journey, and allow time for delays. Stress release is important for good health. Don't be overly critical of others; good humored tolerance will be appreciated. September's eclipses, on the 7th and 22nd, bring a touch of boredom and restlessness making it temporarily hard to concentrate. A new spiritual tradition intrigues you.

From the autumn equinox through mid-October Mars and other Libra transits create a stir in your home and family sector. It's a good time to do some space clearing, repainting, or house cleaning. Focus on problem solving rather than expressing anger, especially near the Full Moon of October 6. Samhain finds Mars and Venus doing a pirouette in your sector of love and happiness. This lasts through November 16. Since the god and goddess of love are joined by retrograde Mercury, an old flame could be rekindled or an old heartache healed. Pursue new hobbies and avocations as the autumn days darken

and shorten. By late November Jupiter will begin a yearlong passage through Sagittarius, which rules the section of your chart linked to health. It forms a stellium involving Pluto, Mercury, the Sun, Mars, and Venus in turn through Yuletide. Visit a spa and restock your vitamins. Plan a very organized routine. It's important to make good use of time, your most valuable asset, now.

The first Full Moon of 2007 brightens your sign on January 3. It's in opposition to Mercury and ushers in a two-week period when others will offer ideas and suggestions. Look at all alternatives and listen well. Mid-January through the end of Feb-ruary brings assertive and volatile individuals your way, for Mars opposes your Sun from the 7th house. Avoid potentially turbulent confrontations. Double-check rules and regulations. Keep competitive situations in good taste and as friendly as possible. Devote the Candlemas sabbat to peaceful works; make an amulet to enhance harmony. On February 21 Venus crosses your mid-heaven where it will remain for most of winter. Devote time to projecting the best image at work. A friendship or social event at the office may impact your career potentials. The eclipses in March find your curiosity piqued. There is much you would like to learn and understand. Attending a seminar or doing some independent reading could be especially satisfying during the final weeks of the year.

HEALTH

The Full Moon of June 11 aspects Pluto in your health sector. A four-week cycle commences during which your body will communicate which adjustments in lifestyle are needed to enhance strength. Curb tendencies to overeat or indulge in foods which are too rich or spicy. On Thanksgiving weekend Jupiter, the celestial healer, begins a yearlong passage through your 6th house of wellness. The transit occurs in Sagittarius, which especially links to animals. The love and companionship of pets can work wonders in promoting good health. Walking a favorite dog or horseback riding on a scenic trail is wonderful therapy. Animal companions can heal the spirit as well as the body.

LOVE

Benevolent Jupiter promises opportunities aplenty for romance from the spring equinox until after Samhain. It glides through your 5th house of pleasure during this entire time period. On July 18, Venus enters your sign. This promises great joy during the bright days of Summer. Since water signs are involved in this happy pattern, create a love talisman of shells, preferably those you've collected yourself. Create an altar dedicated to love embellished with mermaid and other sea creature motifs.

SPIRITUALITY

Eclipses in Pisces on September 7 and March 18 will profoundly impact your spiritual outlook by the year's end. Inspiration, perhaps from a new guru, shaman, or high priestess, will broaden and change your previously held beliefs. Astral projection in the dream state can occur, providing insight into new spiritual dimensions. Consider travel at the autumnal equinox. A journey taken then to attend a special ceremony at a sacred site can mark a turning point in your spiritual awakening.

FINANCE

Serious Saturn sits in your financial sector all year, making you very aware of the consequences of past monetary decisions. Reject futile regrets, and resolve to learn the lessons of the past instead. Patience is a must in seeking payment for work. Money may take a bit of extra time to arrive; a new income will be generated after efforts are made. Near Yuletide Jupiter aspects Saturn favorably in fire signs and the financial situation brightens. Light bayberry candles at the winter solstice coupled with written affirmations related to prosperity. Seek a coin minted in your year of birth. Hold it so that the candle's glow touches the coin. This will create a potent and unique charm to carry in your wallet.

LEO

The year ahead for those born under the sign of the Lion
July 23–August 22

The magnificent and self-reliant Lion follows his own path with confidence and doesn't look back at those trailing behind. With a special link to the heart, Leo loves generously and with great loyalty, always basking in praise and adoration. You reward those who are appreciative and true. Zodiacal symbolism from the church of San Miniato al Monte in Florence prominently features a carved lion which was created in 1207. The lion gazes along the entire length of the church toward the center of a large zodiac. Its eyes are tiny suns, promising eternal light shining from the darkness.

The vernal equinox is followed closely by an eclipse. From the first day of spring through All Fool's Day be aware of how the spending habits and financial obligations of others impact your own security. During the first week of April, Saturn completes its retrograde and moves rapidly through your sign until turning retrograde again on December 6. The consequences of old choices will be apparent. Address the most important considerations first, then make an effort to use time wisely in the weeks to come. The keyword now is "effort." You must keep trying. Rewards will manifest eventually.

On April 15 Mars enters your 12th house where it will remain until early June. You'll find peace while helping those less fortunate. Connect with nature to release frustration or anger. Spend time in quiet reflection on May Eve. Your social life brightens on May 4. Venus enters your sister fire sign of Aries, aspecting your Sun through the end of the month. Friendships with well traveled and well educated people bring joy. On June 3 Mars enters Leo where it will march with Saturn until just before your birthday. The combination of these two celestial heavyweights accents the importance of self control and positive goals. Much can be accomplished if you don't lose your temper or neglect important preparations. If athletic, take reasonable safety precautions and work gradually toward feats of physical endurance. On Midsummer's Day honor the solar forces by spending time in the full spectrum light.

From June 29–July 10 Mercury poses on the Leo cusp before going retrograde. A potential solution to longtime problems needs more work. Just after Independence Day Jupiter completes its retrograde in the sector of home and family life. Living arrangements are about to improve. Real estate transactions can be profitable in the months ahead. For those with bittersweet memories of early home and family life, it's time to process them for release. This allows a new sense of peace and acceptance to develop. On July 24 the New Moon in Leo marks a favorable time to make decisions about commitments.

During all of August, Mars in Virgo impacts your finances. There's an urge to work harder and acquire financial security. By August 12 both Mercury and Venus transit your sign. The remainder of August and the early days of September will be very upbeat. Travel brings pleasure and success. Pursue social and creative outlets. Some very enjoyable invitations come your way through the Labor Day weekend. Plan a party.

Eclipses on September 7 and 22 impact your financial situation. Money can come from another source. There is something unpredictable about old financial patterns. Your values and priorities regarding finances are shifting. During the second week of September, Mars and Mercury enter Libra and accent your 3rd house. Learn by listening carefully to conversations.

Journeys related to work or education can be rewarding. Mid to late September brings a solution to transportation dilemmas. At the autumnal equinox select projects which can be completed sooner rather than later. A bond with a neighbor or sibling strengthens as October begins, for both Venus and the Sun will transit the 3rd house. Your happy thoughts act as a magnet to draw support from others.

At All Hallows a stellium of five Scorpio planets, including retrograde Mercury, stir your 4th house of home and family matters. An old family secret could come to light. In late November Jupiter, the greater benefic, begins a yearlong passage through Sagittarius, your sister fire sign. This creates a very positive celestial influence. Sagittarius rules love and pleasure in your life. A cycle begins when romantic relationships have new promise for growth. At Yuletide expect an animal guide to bring a message from the spirit world. During early January, first Venus then Mercury will join Neptune in your sector of closest partnerships. A new commitment, business or personal, is formed. Be observant. For better or worse, someone is not exactly as they first seem. Candlemas favors blessing a relationship. The Full Moon on February 2 falls in your sign, ushering in a month of processing deepest emotions. You'll be guided by heightened intuition. From the end of February through March 17 Venus shines in Aries, benevolently aspecting Jupiter and Pluto in Sagittarius and your Sun. Attend the theater. You might even consider auditioning for a role. You'll enjoy all that is bright, dramatic, and colorful. Winter ends while you enjoy past memories and simultaneously look forward to the times to come.

HEALTH

Since Leo is ruled by the Sun, learn more about the healing powers of sun and other forms of light. Try performing the basic daily yoga routine called "sun salutations" faithfully while facing east toward the sunrise. Bask in the sun early or late when the dangerous rays of midday have faded. When it is gentle and mellow, sunlight is antiseptic. Since ancient times bathing in its light has been credited with enhancing wellness and heightening longevity.

LOVE

Your love sector is ruled by Sagittarius. Ponderous Pluto has hovered in that area of your horoscope for many years. There has been great evolution coupled with life-changing experiences as you've followed the quest for the perfect romance. Near your birthday Venus glides through Leo, bringing delightful invitations and at least one admirer. As November ends Jupiter commences a yearlong passage in conjunction with Pluto through your 5th house. Opportunities for a lasting love with potential for growth will abound throughout the winter season. You might enjoy a dalliance with an attractive, special someone from a different age or ethnic group.

SPIRITUALITY

On March 29 a solar eclipse in Mars-ruled Aries impacts your spiritual sector. Devote the spring equinox and May Eve to honoring the gods of battle. Ritual blades will have a deep meaning for you. Consider collecting some engraved swords or antique knives. Stone arrowheads from the Native American mystical traditions of the hunt can also become powerful treasures. Spiritual teachings that encourage following through with a meaningful quest and rising to overcome life's challenges will be inspirational to you.

FINANCE

Serious Saturn creates a reality check. It sets parameters for you by remaining in your sign all year. Live within your means; be patient if you long for items that are costly. Keep working and these treasures will bring more pleasure when you can comfortably afford them. The eclipse pattern this year profoundly impacts your 2nd and 8th houses which link strongly to security issues and income. Be flexible and receptive to changes in your source of income. It's a good year to restructure financial strategies.

VIRGO

The year ahead for those born under the sign of the Virgin
August 23–September 22

A strong work ethic and devotion to duty characterizes you. The quest for perfection in an imperfect world may create stress for you to overcome. Cleanliness and order are your personal mantras. Following them helps bring your brightest and best potentials to life. You enjoy sifting through details to arrive at truth. Depictions of the Virgin prior to 1600 show a star perched on the lady's shoulder. This is thought to address the importance of fixed stars in this constellation. Ears of corn or sheaves of grain are frequently held in the Virgin's arms, alluding to Virgo's rulership over the digestive processes and the intestines.

"Creatures of habit" is a term befitting those closest to you at the onset of spring. Mercury is retrograde in Pisces, your opposing sign, which impacts all of your relationships. Allow companions to learn from the past. After March 25 they'll be more progressive and prepared to move forward. The eclipse of March 29 finds someone talking about new financial endeavors. This may impact your personal security during the months ahead. By April 14 Mars moves into a harmonious sextile from Cancer. From then throughout May you'll be able to solve difficulties through discussion and multitask with ease. At Beltane perform a blessing on your home to promote peace with a volatile neighbor or sibling. Travel prospects are wonderful from mid-May through the summer solstice as both Venus and Mars aspect your 9th house with a favorable trine.

After Midsummer's Day Venus changes signs and forms a volatile t-square aspect with Uranus and Pluto in mutable signs. The angles of your chart are impacted. Coworkers may stir up some difficult job politics. Release stress and focus on priorities as you try to balance domestic and career responsibilities. July 23–September 8 Mars hurls through Virgo, bringing much excitement. Daily life is hectic. Much can be accomplished, but don't give way to anger. Devote the Lammastide sabbat to a peace blessing ritual. Make a bouquet or fan with feathers of doves and gulls to honor calmness and generate peace. The winds of change will blow throughout your birthday month as the eclipse pattern aspects your Sun. Willingly extend a welcoming embrace to all that is new.

As October begins Venus, the Sun, and Mars move through your 2nd house. Pursue opportunities to add to your income. Extra cash allows you to purchase a long desired item by Samhain. Mercury turns retrograde just before the All Hallows. Be patient if plans for celebration of the sabbat have to be modified at the last minute. Verify appointments and be sure to have vehicles serviced if you're planning to drive a long distance. Through November 18 make notes to jog your memory and double-check to collect belongings if you're visiting. As November ends, your home and family sector is activated. Your residence can be redecorated or repaired, making it more comfortable in anticipation of the winter holiday season. Family ties are growing stronger and offer greater happiness and emotional support.

On December 11 Venus enters your 5th house of love and pleasure where it makes a wonderful aspect until January 3. Yuletide offers some memorable social opportunities. Since earth sign transits are creating supportive aspects now, decorate the coven stead with a living evergreen tree. Give the birds a winter treat by stringing popcorn, peanuts, and berries on natural thread to decorate it, then transplant the entire assembly outdoors. Travel is favored during early January, as Mercury is in Capricorn until the 14. A loved one

might plan a surprise journey. It's a good time to make decisions; your mind will be especially sharp and clear. From mid-January through the end of February, Mars trines your Sun. Your vitality is in peak form and the high level of energy motivates you to initiate a variety of projects which add dimension to your life. You'll enjoy taking a position of leadership near Candlemas. The lunar eclipse of March 3 in your sign indicates heightened psychic awareness and intense emotional expression. Appreciate the elements of surprise which are at work in your life now. When Mercury turns direct on March 7 it's time to release restrictive links to the past such as worn-out possessions or a relationship you've outgrown.

Winter's last days favor facing the future. Mars and Venus will both quincunx your Sun during early March. The hand of fate is in evidence. Fulfill all promises and gather information. A relationship may change near the March 18 lunar eclipse. This lunation profoundly impacts your 7th house of partnerships. Accept meetings and partings graciously that week. Someone close to you wants to try a new project or wander an unfamiliar path. Allow this to happen. Don't create any obstacles, and all will be well.

HEALTH

Neptune hovers in your health sector all year. Good or bad, a health situation might not be as it first seems. Strive for a clear diagnosis and don't hesitate to get a second opinion if there is confusion. Since the sign of Aquarius is involved, your circulatory system might be a little sluggish. Massage or stretching exercises can be helpful. Protect yourself from any discomfort linked to prolonged exposure to the extremes of heat and cold. With two eclipses impacting your Sun, your life is changing. Be aware of any shifts in your vitality and respond accordingly.

LOVE

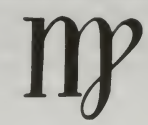
Saturn rules your 5th house of love. All year transiting Saturn in Leo in your 12th house promises elements of secrecy surrounding the tender passions. You might yearn to be closer to someone who is unavailable or have to work through regrets about a lost love. Offering help to less fortunate people or animals can bring you a deep emotional satisfaction. It might well lead to a romantic involvement with a kind and compassionate individual. September and December find the stars especially favorable for love.

SPIRITUALITY

Your 9th house, the route toward a deeper spiritual or philosophical nature, is ruled by Taurus and Venus. Try sacred drumming with a regular drum circle or making objects from clay and semi-precious stones to express a spiritual feeling. Craft your own dreamcatcher or arrange a medicine wheel with favorite crystals. The Full Moon following Samhain, on November 5, should stimulate a spiritual awakening. Plan a drawing down of the Moon ceremony that evening. Since the Moon will strongly aspect Scorpio planets including Jupiter, a past life message can come your way leading to a broader understanding of the karmic lessons of this present incarnation.

FINANCE

As spring begins the Aries eclipse in your 8th house can bring some changes in an investment program or inheritance. Review tax strategies and insurance coverage near All Fool's Day. A favorable Jupiter aspect to your Sun remains in force through Thanksgiving. The sector of education and information is involved. It's a wonderful year to learn more about financial management and to perfect skills which can add to your income. From Yuletide through the end of the year, reduce overhead related to housing costs. Think twice about costly remodeling or a move into a more expensive neighborhood. Live within your means, and all will be well regarding the monetary situation.



LIBRA

The year ahead for those born under the sign of the Scales
September 23–October 22

Personable, balanced, and charming, this Venus-ruled sign excels as a mediator or diplomat. You have a strong sense of fair play and derive pleasure from contact with others. A good listener and a very loyal friend, Libra has a gregarious side. The Venus connection often brings inherent talent in the arts. An early Egyptian hieroglyph for Libra shows the Scales with a setting Sun, in tribute to the autumnal equinox which marks the onset of Libra. Milton had a vision of God creating Libra, the golden scales, to draw a line between the good and the rebellious angels. That metaphor hints at this sign's traditional affinity with justice.

Those closest to you are preparing for some significant lifestyle changes as spring begins, for the eclipse on March 29 falls in your 7th house of relationships. Be supportive. Allow loved ones to explore. Venus shines in your sister air sign of Aquarius through April 5, favorably impacting the love and pleasure sector of your birth chart. Whatever shifts are due will be for the better. A new love could replace a longtime attachment. Decorate your altar with spring flowers and perform magical workings dedicated to creativity and beauty. Mid-April through early June finds Mars in your 10th house. Competitive situations are developing at work. You're especially ambitious and may make an effort to outshine a competitor. Keep this rivalry good-humored. Near May Eve maintaining your image and reputation can be a sensitive issue.

In June Uranus turns retrograde in your health sector. Past patterns in regard to health hold the key to understanding changes in your vitality. Since Mercury and Jupiter aspect Uranus favorably, a deep healing can take place by using visualization, faith, and positive affirmations. Mars conjoins Saturn in your 11th house near Midsummer's Eve. Conservative friends offer practical advice. Examine the steps necessary to bring a cherished goal to fruition. From June 24–July 18 Venus transits Gemini while forming a harmonious trine to your Sun. A journey to a foreign land or sacred site would be inspirational. You'll be attracted to well-read and cultivated companions. At Lammastide Mars is in your 12th house. Healing and inspiration come through solitude. You'll tend to be more reserved, preferring to guard your privacy. During the last half of August a stellium of planets forms in Leo at a sextile aspect to your Sun, impacting your 11th house. Your social life becomes more active. A group project, perhaps linked to politics or community service, can become a focal point.

September's eclipses bring a greater awareness of nature spirits and enhance your psychic rapport with animals. By the autumnal equinox Mars is firmly established in a conjunction with your Sun. This promises greater energy and initiative through October 23. You'll be inclined to argue a bit, but can accomplish much. The New Moon in your sign on October 22 provides focus and direction. There is an accent on material security at Samhain, for the Sun as well as Jupiter, Mercury, Venus, and Mars all hover in your 2nd house. Devote the sabbat to prosperity magic; contemplate what true riches mean in your life. As November begins you'll seek an increase in income. Plans are being made to purchase a long desired item by the New Moon on November 20.

As Yuletide nears, several Sagittarius transits, including Pluto and Jupiter, highlight the 3rd house. There's a flurry

of notes, e-mails, and telephone calls related to holiday travel. Conversations are meaningful now and can brighten perspectives. Sharing anecdotes helps keep the holiday magic alive. On December 11 Venus begins a transit through your home and family sector. Improvements can be made regarding your residence and family dynamics. At the winter solstice prepare a pomander tied with golden ribbon and hang it high in the home to assure harmony and safety for all who dwell within.

On January 4 a really positive cycle begins regarding love, for Venus joins idealistic Neptune in your 5th house of pleasure and romance. A soul-mate connection or psychic bond can develop with one whom you admire. Children are a source of joy as well. At Candlemas health is accented, for three planets, including Uranus, are gathering in your wellness sector. Serve healthy herbal teas and a hearty soup of winter vegetables at the sabbat ritual. Select blue and gold candles to light in order to invoke healing on the mental and physical planes. By Valentine's Day Mercury turns retrograde and moves back toward your love sector, where it will remain as winter wanes. Past patterns hold the key to love's mysteries. Listen carefully to what a dear one says, for conversations are meaningful now. Make decisions about an important liaison after the retrograde is complete on March 8. A strong, positive Mars influence during March makes it an ideal time to perfect your skill in a winter sport, develop an exercise program, or begin a regime of hatha yoga. A very creative cycle commences for those Libras involved in the arts.

HEALTH

The eclipses on September 7 and March 18 relate directly to your health. These are times to make needed changes. Be aware of how healthy your working conditions are. Take regular breaks during the day and seek to release job-related stress. Uranus hovers in your health sector all year, in mutual reception with Neptune. You can overcome old health conditions. A message in a dream or an omen which arrives by synchronicity can initiate healing.

LOVE

On April 13 spring's first Full Moon falls in your birth sign. The lunation forms a grand trine in air signs with Neptune in Aquarius and Mars in Gemini. A four-week cycle commences that favors romance. You might be the object of a rather persistent courtship. Bask in the admiration. During October, Venus and Mars, the celestial love and passion planets, march hand in hand through your birth sign. A relationship is very promising near your birthday. Your charisma level will be very high between the autumnal equinox and All Hallows. Place figurines of Mars and Venus on the altar and dedicate them to the Lord and Lady of love, respectively.

SPIRITUALITY

The first three weeks of spring find Mars dashing through your spiritual sector while forming a trine to mystical Neptune. A debate involving philosophy and comparative spiritual practices could provide inspiration. Consider planning a shamanic journey or vision quest just after the vernal equinox. The Full Moon on December 4 falls in your 9th house of the higher mind. It could bring an excursion which serves as a catalyst for spiritual growth. Two Virgo eclipses in your 12th house, on September 22 and March 3, will awaken you to the spiritual truths to be found in solitude. Your long-harbored dread of loneliness dissipates.

FINANCE

Benevolent Jupiter begins the year in retrograde motion in your 2nd house of cash flow. Focus on clearing up any old debts or other financial problems. During the first week of July, Jupiter turns direct and will move rapidly through Scorpio, your financial sector, until the end of November. Finances should become much more promising at that time. Pursue opportunities to add to your income. Think big; be confident. Jupiter favors largesse.

SCORPIO

The year ahead for those born under the sign of the Scorpion
October 23–November 21

All that is mysterious attracts you, Scorpio. Deeply sensitive, you're easily hurt by rejection or misunderstandings. Your strong opinions create a subtle mood of intensity about you. You're capable of great devotion and concentration when a topic touches you emotionally and have a reputation for going to extremes and generating controversy. The processes of life, death, and rebirth have a traditional association with your sign as does the mythology of Pluto, lord of the afterlife and the modern ruler of Scorpio.

Lucky Jupiter blesses you as spring begins. It's midway through a passage in your birth sign which lasts through November 23. This once-in-twelve-years transit heralds growth, new perspectives, and opportunity. Since Jupiter aspects Uranus during this cycle, prepare for events to unfold suddenly. Be adventurous in spirit; rise to the occasion before opportunities are lost. The Aries eclipse on March 29 accents health and organization. It is not the time to make a sudden decision about adopting a new animal companion. Make certain the newcomer is compatible with the household as a whole.

From early April through Beltane, Venus glides through Pisces forming a lovely trine in your 5th house of pleasure and dalliance. Love trends are very upbeat. It's a favorable time to attend concerts, movies, or art shows. Your 9th house is activated by Mars in Cancer during May. Ambitious, long-distance travel schedules are favored, especially if you're traveling over or near water. May also favors finalizing plans for higher education. The Full Moon on May 13 shines in your sign, ushering in a four-week cycle of self discovery. Your talent and influence will be noteworthy. During June, Mars joins Saturn in Leo to create a square aspect involving your 10th house. Career responsibilities need attention. Be patient. There are hurdles to overcome. Devote the Midsummer's Eve sabbat to magical workings focused on balancing professional ambitions with release of stress.

July will be less hectic. Planets in Cancer, Pisces, and Scorpio form a grand trine in water, your element. Trust your instincts. Mercury is retrograde during most of July. It moves back from the cusp of your midheaven into the 9th house. Discuss comparative literature or various spiritual traditions and polish foreign language skills. At Lammastide experiment with past life regression or dream analysis. You're rewarded with new insight concerning the direction of your life. During the first ten days of August a Mercury-Venus transit in Cancer favors lyrical and poetic communication. Use words creatively. This is a terrific time to design business or greeting cards, address labels, and personal stationery. As mid-August approaches, several Leo transits in your 10th house encourage you to learn more about your career. A friendship with a helpful coworker opens an important door. After the 13th Venus joins Saturn in Leo, your career sector. A softer mood prevails at your work place, and professional duties grow more fulfilling.

On September 4 Pluto completes a long retrograde pattern in your financial sector. Old debts can be paid. Preparations are underway to enhance your income in the weeks to come. September's eclipses on the 7 and 22 in Pisces and Virgo, respectively are favorably aspected and promise interesting new friendships, new perspectives on love, and a cycle of great creativity. Expect a birth announcement near the autumnal equinox. As October begins, the need for peace and privacy is strong with your 12th house activated by a four-planet stellium in

Libra. There is much you'd prefer to keep to yourself. Acts of charity and personal sacrifice bring unexpected rewards. By October 24 Mars enters your birth sign. A six-week cycle of higher energy and a competitive mood commences. Your leadership ability grows. Moderate exercise works wonders for your overall well-being.

Just before Halloween, Venus begins a three-week passage through Scorpio. This promises to be one of the happiest times all year for social activity. Prepare love charms and philters at the sabbat. A lost love may return to become a treasured friend. Accept invitations or plan a party. The New Moon on November 20 is an ideal time to make any kind of commitment. December finds the sector of finances and material security emphasized by a grouping of Sagittarius planets, and you'll want to shop. There are some treasures you simply must have. On December 6 Saturn turns retrograde in your career sector. Follow traditions, rules, and regulations. A conservative approach is best regarding work. At the winter solstice purchase a new clock or watch for the coven stead. Honor the magic of time.

In late December Mercury joins the Sun and Venus in your 3rd house, making you a bit restless. Some variety would be appreciated as New Year's Eve nears. A change of scene should refresh and inspire. At Candlemas prepare a ritual to promote peace and harmony at home. Through the remainder of the winter a variety of Aquarius transits including the Sun and Mars will motivate you to make positive changes in home life and living arrangements.

HEALTH

The March 29 eclipse impacts your vitality. Be aware of how your body responds to diet and exercise habits. Springtime favors making changes aimed at health improvement. Candle burning can be an effective technique to promote wellness. As the color, light, and heat mingle, the lit candle will generate an energy field. Dedicate it to health by rubbing it with patchouli oil, your sacred aromatherapy. Try a blue candle for safety, a red one for strength, or a white one for release from grief and for peace of mind.

LOVE

The last few years have marked an interesting but erratic time in your social life. Volatile Uranus has been in your love sector, creating unexpected meetings and partings. You may have experienced a change of heart. Allow love connections to develop while you explore and reflect. Take time to be certain of what it is you truly desire. Don't commit on a whim. Since Pisces, ruler of the feet, governs your romance and pleasure sector, going dancing can create the climate for true love. Pisces also suggests that romance can be discovered on a beachside stroll or while learning to sail or scuba dive. April, late July through mid-August, and November bring favorable Venus influences. Social prospects are especially promising during those times.

SPIRITUALITY

With sentimental, nostalgic Cancer ruling your 9th house of spiritual thought, touring historical districts can impact your spirituality. Explore archeological sites linked to worship; learn about the values of those who have gone before. Keepsakes and memorabilia can have a spiritual significance for you. Practice psychometry on vintage photos or jewelry. Keep a journal of encounters you've sensed with ghosts. The Full Moon on January 3 promises heightened spiritual awareness from family keepsakes and talismans as well as recollections of your earliest spiritual teachings.

FINANCE

The spring begins with Jupiter, ruler of your 2nd house of finances, in retrograde motion. Fulfill old obligations; be aware of the force of habit regarding money management. Just after July 4, Jupiter changes direction. A cycle of prosperity is enjoyed as the planet of blessings completes a conjunction with your Sun shortly after your birthday. A prosperity ritual performed at the New Moon on November 20 would be especially effective.

SAGITTARIUS

The year ahead for those born under the sign of the Archer
November 22–December 21

As cheerful seekers of enlightenment and experience, Sagittarians often pursue truth through travel and study. Animals are often very important to those born under this half creature and half human sign. A 13th century drawing of the bowman from a zodiac in Amiens Cathedral in Picardy, France, shows him with goatlike legs replacing the familiar horse's body. The drawn bow of spiritual aspiration aims heavenward. Combined with the arrow, the bow forms a cross, which symbolizes the four elements of the material world. Thus the Sagittarian task of lifting the material into the spiritual is shown. Guiding others brings fulfillment, for you truly enjoy the challenge of improving upon the status quo.

The vernal equinox is tinged with a strong Mars influence. The celestial warrior opposes your Sun until April 13. Keep competition upbeat and good humored. Counteract the intensity of others with a little levity. During the last half of April favorable aspects from Mercury in Aries and Saturn in Leo bring insight and stability to your life. A new love and bright plans for the future exhilarate you. On May 3 Venus begins a month-long passage through your 5th house. Romance is promising and a new avocation brings hours of pleasure. Honor the inner child. On another level, this transit favors the conception or adoption of a child for those Sagittarians wishing to expand the family.

June 11 brings a Full Moon in your birth sign, the lunation conjoins Pluto. A wonderful cycle for self discovery begins. Insight is especially keen, and there's a sense of rebirth following the clearing of old blockages. From early June through mid-July Mars moves through Leo, activating the 9th house of travel and higher education. It's an especially favorable time to explore either the Native American traditions of the desert southwest or to ghost hunt in medieval castles. The summer solstice accents your 8th house. Transits of Mercury and the Sun in that sector indicate that others may impact your security. Inherited or invested funds as well as tax and insurance payments require attention. Past life and karmic situations can impact current financial strategies. Allow fate to play her hand and accept the inevitable graciously. Still, communicate with a partner in regard to shared finances.

As Lammastide nears, your career sector is impacted by strongly aspected mutable sign transits. Much is expected of you. It's time to get organized. Separate family needs from career responsibilities. A new challenge appeals to you. August 11–27 Mercury is especially favorable, gifting you with quick wit. Decisions made during that period will be wise ones. That's also one of the very best travel cycles all year. If a sudden opportunity for travel arises, don't hesitate to pursue it. At the end of August through the first week of September, Venus in Leo trines Pluto in Sagittarius. Love connections are a source of healing and encouragement. September's eclipses, on the 7th and 22nd, affect your 4th and 10th houses. This brings a need for adjustment in home life as well as in the pursuit of professional aspirations. A move is possible. Focus magical workings at the autumn equinox on stabilizing volatile situations. Seek order amid chaos. A talisman made of hematite, which has the ability to ground, might be helpful.

The end of September through early October finds well aspected Libra placements gathering in your 11th house in a sextile aspect to your Sun. Friends are a

special blessing now. Membership in an organization can be a catalyst for happiness and accomplishment. As Samhain nears in late October you'll become more introspective. First Mercury, then Mars, and finally Venus will join Jupiter in your 12th house. There is much that you'll hesitate to share. Mercury's retrograde transit in November may find you dwelling on old regrets or a lost love. Realize that memories are tricky; a situation might not have been exactly as you remember it. Learn from the past, appreciate it, and then release it to make way for the new as your birthday nears.

On November 17 Venus enters Sagittarius. Love and happiness are enhanced through early December. Accept invitations, purchase new holiday finery, and circulate. By November 24 Jupiter, your ruler, begins a yearlong passage through your sign. A time of great luck and growth commences. Make the most of opportunities and follow your brightest dreams. An ambition can be fulfilled in the weeks to come. Mars enters Sagittarius on December 6 where it moves into a conjunction with Jupiter and Pluto by mid-January. The Yuletide season and the early days of 2007 are very active. Control anger and impatience. Don't overwhelm timid individuals. It's a good cycle to assume a leadership role and try all that is new and fresh. During the week before Candlemas your 3rd house is highlighted. Much is learned through conversations and letters. Commuter travel accelerates in frequency and importance. At the sabbat emphasize the power of written affirmations and sacred chants. A neighbor becomes a better friend. On February 21 Venus enters your love sector where it will remain until the last days of winter. Your charisma level is heightened; a romance becomes more promising. At the same time March's eclipses create some complexities at work or around your residence. Adjust.

HEALTH

Taurus rules the health house of your birth chart. Noise pollution can bother you. Peace and quiet and pleasant music have great healing potential. Try listening to chakra attunements and other music oriented toward healing and elevating the spirit. When Jupiter, your ruling planet, completes its retrograde in your 12th house during the first week of July your vitality begins to improve. A longtime health concern can be overcome.

LOVE

At the spring equinox bless a pink and a red candle with rose oil and ignite both on the altar to welcome a new love. The eclipse of March 29 impacts your love sector. Spring promises a change of heart and some excitement. With Mars linked to love, you always enjoy a partner who poses a challenge. Don't marry in haste, for you have a deep love of freedom and must find a partner who allows you a large measure of independence. Alternatives to a conventional marriage can be suitable.

SPIRITUALITY

Serious Saturn is midway through a transit in your 9th house. You'll seek spiritual teachings which offer tangible help concerning real life issues. Traditional teachings and observance of spiritual ceremonies and holidays will help you connect with the divine. The Full Moon on February 2 promises a breakthrough in spiritual awakening. Meditate at Candlemas to be more receptive to this.

FINANCE

Capricorn and Saturn rule your 2nd house of finances. You have an inner dread of loss and lack. Enjoy all you do have. Faith in universal abundance and prosperity principles must be developed. Just after Thanksgiving the influences of benevolent Jupiter strengthen. Financial prospects are very promising as the year ends. Be alert to high overhead though. The eclipse pattern indicates the need to budget for home repairs and improvements. You might also have to purchase new equipment or invest in career training. This can generate some business-related expenses in September or March 2007.

CAPRICORN

The year ahead for those born under the sign of the Goat
December 22–January 19

Great ambition, respect for authority, and a responsible nature characterize Capricorn. Ruled by serious Saturn, you seek security and will plan for the future. A methodical and industrious nature is closely associated with this sign. Mysteriously, the Goat is often portrayed with a fish tail. This creates a paradox with the image of the mountain goat who turns his back on the sea to climb among the rocky peaks and the clouds. The basis in water lore indicates that Capricorn can remain a secret romantic, guided by the unconscious or psychic powers while still dwelling on the mountain of logical awareness.

Spring's early days find Saturn retrograde in Leo, impacting your 8th house. Honor the memory of those who have passed into the Summerland. When the retrograde is completed on April 5 you'll feel free to release and move forward. The eclipse of March 29 highlights home and family life. A residential move may be considered, and relatives are experiencing some changes. Dynamic and demanding people approach you from mid-April through June 2, for Mars transits your opposite sign of Cancer. You might feel that you are being swept along by the ideas of another. Adapt. Back away from confrontations. Devote the Beltane sabbat to ritual work promoting tolerance and camaraderie. Offer handwoven friendship bracelets to those who have been a little difficult. A small gesture to let others know that they are welcome can have an almost miraculous way of resolving problems.

From May 30 through the summer solstice Venus brightens your sector of love and romance with a transit in Taurus, your sister earth sign. You are cherished and admired. Pursue a creative project. It's a marvelous time to study music or to plant a garden. If possible, consider designing a community garden with the goal of providing fresh flowers and vegetables for the early harvest. A child expresses love and devotion during June. June is also an excellent time to welcome new family members.

During most of July, Mercury is retrograde in opposition to your Sun. The 7th house is involved. Discussions revolve around the future of a partnership. Legal matters might require some attention. People close to you are sentimental. On July 10 the Full Moon shines in your birth sign. You'll be especially responsive and sensitive that week. Control emotional impulses and keep a sense of humor if you're upset. On July 22 Mars enters Virgo where it creates a positive trine aspect through the first week of September. Your physical vitality improves, giving you the energy to accomplish much. Others look to you for leadership. At Lammastide incorporate imported foods or wines into the sabbat feast. It's a wonderful time to construct a travel talisman.

By the end of August both Mercury and the Sun join Mars in Virgo. In the weeks leading up to the equinox you'll develop deeper insight into your own nature. Spiritual books and discussion groups or classes can be very helpful. Since the 9th house is involved it's also a good cycle for the pursuit of higher education. September's eclipse pattern shows wider mental horizons developing. You might grow bored with old concepts and long to learn something new.

At the autumnal equinox a grouping of planets gathers near your midheaven while forming a powerful square to your Sun. Making contacts with helpful and powerful individuals, displaying your talents and abilities, and striving to climb a bit higher on the ladder of success will absorb you. Consider adding some feng shui cures to your workspace during early

October. All Hallows brings the blessing of friendship. The two celestial benefics, Venus and Jupiter, are well aspected in your 11th house. You'll be welcomed by new acquaintances; membership in a coven or other organization enhances your life. Devote the sabbat to selecting worthwhile aspirations. The first part of November finds retrograde Mercury putting you in touch with old companions. Good or bad, they haven't changed.

As November ends Jupiter begins a yearlong passage through your 12th house. This transit has long been related to the assistance of guardian angels. Help arrives when least expected and most needed, for angels can come in the form of helpful friends or professional consultants. In mid-December, Venus enters your birth sign where it will remain through the winter holidays. Yuletide should be very happy. A new love prospect hovers on the fringes of social gatherings you attend, waiting shyly for encouragement from you. The winter solstice finds you in a highly creative mode. Consider making original holiday gifts and decorations. Mercury dashes rapidly through your sign during the first half of January. Travel opportunities abound near your birthday. This transit also favors initiating meetings, conversations, and messages. A bevy of 2nd house placements brings finances to the fore in late January. By January 17 Mars will be firmly enmeshed in your sign where it will remain until late February. You're energetic but must use care to control anger and impatience. Enthusiasm is at a peak. Prepare special lights and tapers to honor the Martian energy at the Candlemas sabbat. As winter wanes, the eclipses of March bring changes in loyalties linked to love and friendship. Expect the sense of having outgrown an old goal or familiar associate.

HEALTH

Retrograde Mercury cycles mark significant times linked to your health care, for Mercury-ruled Gemini governs your 6th house of health. During the retrogrades, study how habits and hereditary factors affect your well-being. The Gemini New Moon on May 27 marks the start of a four-week cycle during which you can implement healthy lifestyle and dietary changes. The link between mental attitude and physical health is especially significant for you. Written affirmations and visualizations as well as chants and mantras can help you to stay well.

LOVE

Cancer rules your 7th house of marriage. Family resemblance and a study of the family tree can influence your choice of the perfect mate. Often someone a generation older or younger will turn out to be a suitable love connection. From May through August a parade of transits in your 7th and 5th houses portend attention, love, and admiration coming your way. A promising relationship can solidify during that time.

SPIRITUALITY

Two of the eclipses this year take place in Virgo which rules your 9th house, the spiritual sector. Changes in beliefs and philosophical outlook may develop. Spiritual teachings which link to health and emphasize scholarship tend to attract you. The health-oriented Virgo influence hints that consuming natural foods subtly assists in developing your spiritual aptitudes. The ancient earth works and earliest earth-oriented religious practices can be meaningful. The hands-on construction of an earthwork can heighten your spiritual consciousness.

FINANCE

Through the end of November, Jupiter forms a bountiful aspect involving your 11th house. Friends can help you to secure work, explore new prospects, and improve your overall security. Saturn makes a quincunx from your 8th house of shared assets all year, though. This is a fated configuration. Debts or other obligations generated by someone close to you can affect your personal income. Adjust, and use care if entering into new financial partnerships. Double-check tax documents and insurance coverage, just to make certain all is well.

AQUARIUS

The year ahead for those born under the sign of the Water Bearer
January 20–February 18

As the zodiac's free-thinking inventor, you are sociable yet original. Some perceive you as rather bohemian. Activities and occupations with a solitary bent, such as scientific research or literature, can be the best outlet for you. You'll shine once your powerful intellect and creativity are allowed free rein. The Egyptian god of the Nile, Hapi, is often portrayed as Aquarius, the water pourer. Sometimes he balances a vase from which two streams flow, representing the duality of life forces.

Nebulous Neptune hovers in your birth sign, conjunct your Sun, the year long. This lends a mystical note to the chain of events in your life. Love prospects are promising from the vernal equinox through April 5, for Venus transits your sign. Reach out to others; your attractiveness and charm are in evidence. The eclipse on March 29 highlights your 3rd house. Expect to have more variety and travel in your life during the early spring. Conversations and mail can be startling, but very interesting. May is all about security issues. Jupiter's influence in Scorpio, your 10th house of career, will be favorably stimulated by Mars in Cancer and Uranus in Pisces. Previous hard work and preparation begin to lead to progress.

On June 4 Mars enters Leo, your opposing sign, where it remains until July 22. Others seem more assertive. Offer affirmations for harmony and justice at Midsummer's Eve. A legal matter might require a touch of magical attention then too. A lighthearted attitude in competitive situations is essential. A delightful new animal companion can stray into your home and heart near Lammas Eve. Venus will be well aspected in the part of your horoscope which relates to small animals July 19–August 12. The Full Moon of August 9 falls in your sign, making you the center of attention. Others seek your counsel and guidance. This lunation sets the pace for the next four weeks. It is close to Saturn in Leo, which opposes your Sun. You'll be very aware of companions' limitations. Allow for the differences generation and background make in their capabilities.

September's eclipses on the 7th and 22nd in Pisces and Virgo emphasize the money sectors of your birth chart. Income may come from a new source; there may be changes in budgeting strategies as the autumn equinox draws near. Higher education has great appeal during early October, for a series of Libra transits will be well aspected in the 9th house. Plans to enroll in a program of formal education formulated now would be successful. It's a great time to study independently too. As Halloween nears career matters reach important turning points. Scorpio transits, including Jupiter, highlight your 10th house of fame and fortune. Explore options; look within to discover what direction you truly want to take. Wait until after November 18 if you're considering a job change. That's when Mercury completes its retrograde. Either a sudden opportunity arises or your ambitions build to the point where you'll create your own break. If you've been undecided about a career issue, suddenly inspiration comes. Uranus, your ruler, completes a long retrograde in your 2nd house of finances at the New Moon on November 20. Debts or other obligations which have held you back since the retrograde began on June 19 finally get under control. You're about to be free to progress more rapidly. Near Thanksgiving Day Sagittarius planets highlight your 11th house. Your circle of friends, which is always wide and varied, expands even further. A

new group affiliation can introduce you to some fascinating new characters who will brighten the long, dark days before Yule.

Evaluate goals and future projects during the week of the winter solstice. The New Moon on December 20 makes you aware of how treasured friendships enrich your life. One of the new acquaintances may join your inner circle as the holiday season progresses. You'll be reserved about discussing your tender sentiments and most important plans during the last week of 2006, as Mercury enters your 12th house. A Gemini Moon on New Year's Eve temporarily changes the mood, introducing more fun and frivolity. Accept an invitation or two as the winter holiday season ebbs.

Venus breezes through your birth sign during most of January. If you seek help, others will be especially supportive. Invest extra effort in your appearance. As Candlemas nears Mercury aspects your Sun. A journey can be quite a learning experience. Catch up on correspondence. During February several Pisces transits, including retrograde Mercury, hover in your 2nd house of finances. Be aware of repeating financial patterns, good or bad. Keep a positive attitude about monetary needs. Faith is a factor in the quest for the best quality of life. Dynamic Mars enters your 1st house on February 25 where it remains in conjunction with your Sun through winter's end, making you very motivated. You're bursting with enthusiasm about new projects. Do release stress, however. Step back and regroup if you feel a tinge of anger during March.

HEALTH

Focus on keeping your residence safe and comfortable as a first step in assuring optimum health. Consult the *ba gua* to create feng shui energies apropos to your personal health needs. Sentimental, domestic Cancer rules your health sector. This indicates that understanding health history is a factor in maintaining wellness. Examine your family's health profile and review your own health patterns in earlier years for more insight.

LOVE

Venus blesses your birth sign twice this year, with transits during March, early in April, and again in January. It's a rare cycle when Neptune conjoins Venus both times. The stars greatly favor attainment of the purest and most idealistic variety of true love. A genuine soul mate connection may develop. Prepare a love philter at the vernal equinox to invoke the magic of spring. A choice between several love prospects might have to be made May 19–June 2 when Mercury moves rapidly through your love sector. Select the one whom you enjoy conversing with and who shares a good joke or story.

SPIRITUALITY

Sociable Libra rules your 9th house of the higher mind. Spirituality can be developed through the example of friends. Attending a regular meditation or drum circle can provide spiritual awakening. Justice and equality link to your spiritual awareness. Religious freedom and diversity provide a catalyst for spiritual awakening. During early October, Venus, Mars, and the Sun all impact your spirituality as they move together through Libra. Revel in the colors and traditions of autumn during the weeks between Mabon and Samhain. Prepare an altar to honor the gods and goddesses of the harvest.

FINANCE

A mutual reception between Uranus in Pisces and Neptune in Aquarius impacts your earnings all year. A mutual reception (planets in each other's ruling signs) promises shape-shifting and exchanges. It's easy to make adjustments and resolve long-standing financial dilemmas. Hunches and synchronicities should be heeded; make the most of the new opportunities the universe offers. The eclipses in Pisces and Virgo, your 2nd and 8th houses, profoundly impact both cash flow and investments as well as insurance and taxes. New sources and circumstances linked to your income are on the way. Welcome them.

PISCES

The year ahead for those born under the sign of the Fish
February 19–March 20

With a nature that combines romance with intuition, you are sensitive to the point of being genuinely psychic. Guided more by emotion than intellect, you can seem unreliable or impulsive to those who don't understand you. Still, your loving and caring nature exudes a captivating compassion. The Fish are linked by a silver cord symbolizing the line of pale blue and green fixed stars known to Arabian astrologers as the Al Risha. The cord is recognized in esoteric occultism as the line attaching the spirit to the soul. Forever tied together, the spirit and soul become the zodiac's pair of Fish. The struggling Fish symbolize this complex birth sign which marks both the end and the beginning of the zodiacal wheel.

Retrograde Mercury conjoins changeable Uranus in your birth sign as spring begins. Ongoing discussions slowly bring important information to light. When Mercury turns direct on March 25 a cycle of great progress begins. Pursue travel and study opportunities through April 17. From the last half of April through early June Mars moves through your sister water sign of Cancer, impacting the love and pleasure sector of your chart. Active pursuits are favored. Spring welcomes you with an interesting and inspiring love liaison.

Mercury in Cancer June 3–28 aspects both Uranus in Pisces and Jupiter in Scorpio, creating a benevolent grand trine in water signs. It's a terrific time for vacation travel, especially near water. You're receptive to new ideas; plans for study can be brought to a successful conclusion. Runes, ritual chants, or hieroglyphics have special power to heal and guide at the midsummer sabbat. July's retrograde Mercury favors reconnecting with an old love or adding to collections. Jupiter turns direct early in July as it makes a favorable aspect to your Sun. An item long desired might be found or purchased. On July 22 Mars enters Virgo, your opposing sign, where it will remain through early September. A competitive element affects partnerships. Focus on working together. Others can seem rather assertive or even demanding. At Lammastide the Sun impacts Saturn in your health sector. Past health practices, good or bad, determine your quality of life. It's an excellent time to prepare a health talisman.

September promises much excitement, for the lunar eclipse on the 7th profoundly impacts you. A new environment and new routine are possible. Be receptive to changes, but wait and see which way the wind blows before moving forward. During October the spirit world draws nigh; it's an excellent time to practice mediumship. The veil between this world and the next will be quite thin through All Hallows Eve. A comforting message from the other side arrives near the New Moon of October 22. November opens with five planets in Scorpio impacting your 9th house. It's a wonderful time to learn another language or study foreign cuisine. Grandparent and grandchild relationships provide special joy and build happy memories during the weeks before Thanksgiving. During December, Mars conjoins Jupiter in your 10th house. Your career path is expanding. It's a time to choose worth-while goals and decide in which direction you want to move professionally. Recognition is coming your way; there will be avenues for expressing your highest potential.

At Yuletide the New Moon conjoins Pluto and links to the Mars-Jupiter pattern with powerful cosmic energies near the midheaven of your birth chart. If you yearn for fame and fortune, the path

should open, guiding you in that direction. Dedicate magical workings at the winter solstice toward blessing your career situation. As January begins friendships are truly a blessing, for the Sun, Venus, and Mercury all brighten your 11th house. The first week of 2007 favors activity within groups and organizations. After the 17th dynamic Mars enters that sector, showing some intensifying of involvement. Ambitious people become worthwhile role models. At Candlemas the emphasis switches to love, for Venus is positioned in your birth sign. Throughout most of February your social and romantic prospects will blossom. It's a perfect time to purchase new finery or pursue creative work. During March, Mercury completes a retrograde in your 12th house while hovering near Mars and Neptune. You'll cherish privacy. Revel in solitude and begin a dream journal. Answers brought by dreams and self-reflection are preferable to the guidance offered by others. Winter's finale comes with an eclipse on March 18 in Pisces. Your birthday this year brings with it a new sense of identity. You are embarking on an odyssey of personal discovery. Focus on developing an inherent talent and releasing all that you've outgrown.

HEALTH

Saturn is midway through a two-year transit in your health sector. Following through with fitness programs takes time and patience. Don't skimp on sleep, and take regular breaks when engaged in physically demanding activities. The health impact of heredity and past habits can be in evidence. Since the Sun-ruled sign of Leo, which governs the heart, is linked to this pattern, the healing quality of love can be implemented in a very major way now. Study the technique of healing touch. Bright sunshine colors such as reds and oranges are the key to enhanced vitality. Select foods from this color range. Meditate on sunrises and sunsets to gain deeper insight into suitable health-related decisions.

LOVE

Beltane finds Venus completing a transit through Pisces while Mars is blossoming in your 5th house of romance. The quest for love should be rewarded during the bright and beautiful weeks of mid-springtime. Transits in Cancer are involved, hinting that family members might play matchmaker near the summer solstice. The Cancer New Moon on June 25 brings the specifics into focus. A shared interest in antiques, places of historical interest, or real estate and home decorating can strengthen a romance. When finalizing a commitment concerning a serious relationship, make certain that the two families will blend well. Situations with inlaws tend to be an important factor in your love life, for better or worse.

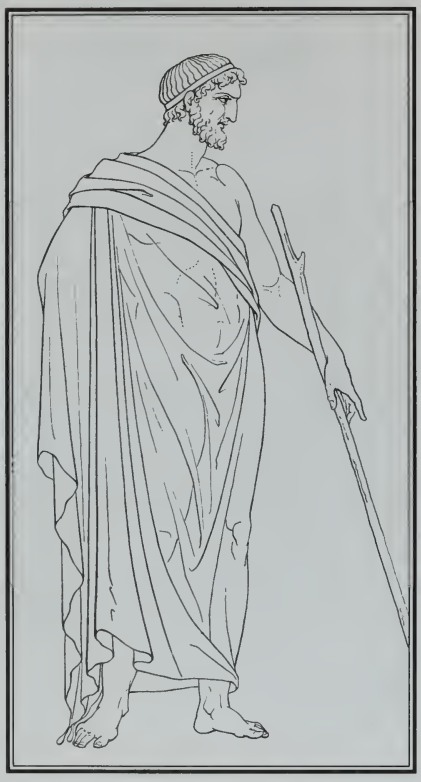
SPIRITUALITY

Growth characterizes spirituality this year through November 23. Expansive Jupiter moves through Scorpio, your sector of faith and philosophy, until then. You'll discard philosophical concepts which you've outgrown in favor of exploring new avenues leading to truth. Pluto has a strong link with spirituality in your life. This lends a gothic touch to your spiritual path. As Pluto rules the processes of death and the afterlife, studying cemetery art and ceremonies honoring those who have passed on can provide an intriguing spiritual study. You would enjoy a ghost tour through an area reputed to be haunted or taking a class in "ghost busting."

FINANCE

Elements of surprise are brewing regarding finances, for the spring begins with a total eclipse on March 29 in your 2nd house of cash flow. New demands in your field can lead to you marketing your salable job skills differently. At the same time, your values are shifting. You might treasure different things than you used to. This may lead you to reinvent your financial strategy. After the July 4 holiday Jupiter turns direct and moves toward a trine with your Sun through All Hallows. This should bring greater financial security and better business options.

TIRESIAS, *the Theban Seer*



OVID'S *Metamorphoses*, Book Three, tells the story of the House of Thebes, but not in a straightforward manner. The tale meanders with side journeys like a stream across the countryside. The Theban legends include such noted members as Oedipus, Semele, Dionysus and Cadmus. But one of the most fascinating figures lingers on the periphery – Tiresias, the blind seer. His story wends its strange way with fascinating transformations.

One day while on a walk he saw two snakes mating. He sat there watching for hours until the snakes sensed his presence and attacked him. Tiresias managed to kill the female – and at that moment was transformed into a woman. In this guise he became a notorious prostitute for the next seven years. Then he again encountered snakes mating, but this time he killed the male. And this time he was transformed back into a man.

Unfortunately his story had come to the attention of the two most contentious gods, Jupiter and Juno. The couple were engaged in a disagreement about which sex enjoyed the most pleasure during intercourse.

Juno insisted men enjoyed sex more and Jupiter claimed the opposite. They decided to let Tiresias judge, since he had experienced both sexes. Jupiter was right, Tiresias replied, "Of ten parts a man enjoys one only, but a woman enjoys the full ten parts in her heart." Juno was outraged and in her anger blinded the judge. But Jupiter, gratified, rewarded Tiresias with the power of seeing the future. As a result Tiresias gained fame for being infallible in his predictions about the future – but the prophesies were as obscure as those of any other oracle.

Other myths provide other explanations for the blindness of Tiresias. One origin claims that he was stricken because he disclosed divine

secrets to mortals. Others claim that he was blinded because he looked at Athena while she was naked. Chariclo, the mother of Tiresias, begged Athena to forgive her son and restore his sight. Athena chose to agree, but was unable to do so because an ancient law decreed blindness as penalty for beholding a god. Since Athena had no power to revive his sight, instead she provided Tiresias with long life, the ability to understand birdsong, the gift of oracles, and a staff that enabled him to walk as if he could see.

Tiresias has been much evoked by poets, playwrights and fiction writers. He has been very useful to authors as one of the foremost seers of classical mythology, a figure cursed by the gods, and a man/woman. T.S. Eliot drew upon him as the primary narrator in his landmark masterpiece, "The Waste Land": "And I Tiresias have foresuffered all..."

The classical playwright Euripides was apparently fascinated with the myth, for he included Tiresias among the cast of characters in three of his plays – *Bacchants*, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, and *Phoenician Women*. The oracle also appears notably in Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, issuing the enigmatic prediction, "He will be discovered to be at once brother and father of the children with whom he consorts; son and husband of the woman who bore him; heir to his father's bed, shedder of his father's blood. So go and evaluate this, and if you find that I am wrong, say then that I have no wit in prophecy." And elsewhere in the superb drama Tiresias observes in a line that resonates, "How terrible it is to have wisdom when it does not benefit those who have it."

– MOONDANCER

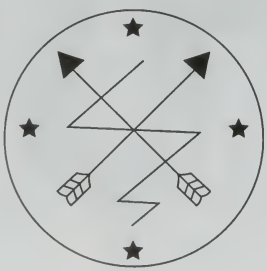
Gentle Wind, Angry Wind

THE YORUBA OF NIGERIA have long honored a pantheon of deities called Orisa that often embodies natural elements. Chief among them is Oya, the ruler of the winds. A female divinity of many masks, she is recognized for her principal attribute as a warrior god riding the turbulent skies. But sometimes she manifests as Afefejeje, Gentle Breeze, revered for her ability to give respite from the heat of the day. In this role she fans her child, keeping the little one's head cool. Some devotees of Oya include in her shrine a toy windmill and a beautiful fan as tributes to her gentle aspect.

In her more fierce manifestation Oya is the goddess of howling winds, tornadoes, squalls and hurricanes. She is the wife of the equally ferocious Sango, Orisa of lightning and fire. Oya often foretells his appearance by blowing the roofs off houses and uprooting trees, and she is the wind that fans the flames of destruction wrought by Sango's lightning.

In Yorubaland where Oya is recognized – Benin and Togo as well as Nigeria – changes of the winds mark the changes of seasons crucial to these old agrarian cultures. The western wind brings the wet season, the northeastern wind brings the dry season. And as the ruler of winds, Oya also represents change in our lives. Cycles like summer breezes may pass quietly through our days. But often Oya is associated with the swift, devastating shifts like tornadoes that occasionally wreak havoc. Yet always in her wake we find quiet recovery. Without change there would be only stagnation.

Oya's dominion includes justice. Her strong, angry winds are tools for punishing the unrighteous. She is not only concerned about people abiding by law, but by their morality and compassion. The marketplace also receives her attention, an important arena of change. Yoruba women are the dealers of food and textiles, and here fortunes may alter



Oya Sigil — the firma (signature) of Oya used in the Diaspora

from poverty to riches, from riches to poverty – swift winds of drastic loss or breezes of affluence. Oya is the chief guardian of these women, and woe to the man who tries to control his merchant wife.

The deity is also known as Iyansa, mother of nine. Among those nine children which she birthed is the masquerade of the dead, the Egungun. Throughout Yorubaland masked member priests of the Egungun Society celebrate annual festivals for the ancestors. Through such masquerades the forebears may manifest among the living. In this way Oya appears again as an element of vast change, from the living to the guardian ancestor. Where the yearly festival has elapsed, Oya is regarded as the deity of the doorway to the cemetery. This manifestation is also associated with a mask – a face that cannot be seen and terrifying to those who have not been initiated.

Oya's winds, drastic or subtle, angry or balmy, always transform circumstances. May her winds blow gently in your life! As the Yoruba would say "let it be blessed" – ASE!

– Ifadoyin Sangomuyiwa

Nigerian Priest to Sango and Babalawo "Father of Secrets"

Traditional Praise Poem for Oya

(Recited to Oya on her day of prayer)

Woman who grows a beard because of war
Powerful wind that tears down trees from their tops
She who threatens to rain with cloudy weather, yet never rains
Of the sixteen goddesses competing to have Ñàngó as a husband
It was Oya who won Sàngó as a husband
By virtue of her charming personality,
Her grace, and her elegance of movement
Oya covers herself with fire as if fire were a dress.

Three Herbs

Mint. From time immemorial a symbol of hospitality. The mint family has over 30 members, the most popular peppermint and spearmint. Peppermint has bright green leaves and a peppery flavor. Spearmint offers true green or gray-green leaves and milder flavor and fragrance. Both grow wild throughout the world. Most plentiful in summer. For a delicious dessert add mint sugar to fresh fruit and berries: Pulse 1/4 cup loosely packed mint and 3 tablespoons sugar in a food processor until finely ground. Sprinkle mint over fruit in a large bowl, toss, and chill. Makes enough for about 6 servings. For an elegant treat, check out the following no-bother-cooking soup.

Chilled Cucumber Mint Soup

3 cucumbers, peeled, seeded and chopped
1 cup peeled, seeded and finely diced cucumber, reserved
1 cup yogurt
2/3 cup sour cream
1/2 teaspoon mustard
salt and pepper to taste
1/4 cup chopped fresh mint leaves

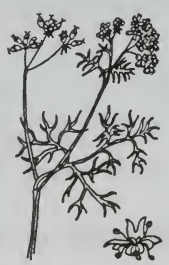
In a blender purée chopped cucumbers, yogurt, sour cream, mustard, salt and pepper. Turn into a bowl and chill soup for at least 6 hours or overnight. At serving time, stir in the reserved diced cucumber and mint. Garnish with thinly sliced cucumber and mint sprigs.

Cilantro. The leaves of the coriander plant are also called Chinese parsley. Cilantro (sih-LAHN-tro) widely used in Asian, Caribbean, and Latin American cookery, has found rising popularity in American kitchens. It lends its distinctive flavor and pungent fragrance to highly spiced foods, cheers up cooked vegetables and salads. We team the herb with carrots for an unusual and easy dish that does especially well for buffet or potluck events.

Cilantro Carrots with Cumin

2 pounds carrots, cleaned. cut into 2-inch pieces and quartered lengthwise
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
3 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons ground cumin
2 minced garlic cloves
2 tablespoons minced cilantro

Combine carrots with 6 tablespoons water in a saucepan, cover, and boil for about 7 minutes or until carrots are tender. Transfer to a large bowl and add lemon juice, olive oil, cumin, garlic, and salt and pepper to taste. Cool the mixture and add cilantro. Serve at room temperature. Serves 8.



Rosemary. Rosemary grows wild throughout the Mediterranean, where it has found its way into cookery since 500 B.C. In earlier times rosemary was used to cure nervous ailments, and Shakespeare thought it was for remembrance. The plant's silvery-green needle-shaped leaves are highly aromatic and offer hints of lemon and pine. Rosemary teams with a wide variety of foods, including chicken, soups, stews, stuffings. The recipe below finds rosemary in an unusual combination – adding its talents to a deliciously buttery cookie. You could vary the basic recipe by adding 1/4 cup chocolate chips to the dough.

Rosemary Shortbread

1/4 cup sugar
1 1/4 cups flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 pound butter
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh rosemary

In a bowl mix together the dry ingredients. Combine the butter and rosemary and microwave until the butter is melted. Add the butter and herb to the dry ingredients and mix until blended. Press the dough into a buttered 9 x 9 cake pan and roll a can or glass on top to smooth. Prick the dough with a fork. Bake for 20 or 25 minutes in a 350-degree oven or until the shortbread edges are lightly browned. Cut into wedges while still hot, but don't remove the dough until it has cooled a bit. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Making the most of a cook's best friends. Evoke all the best flavor and aroma of herbs by cultivating them in your own garden beds or pots. Early herb gardens had been the major source of seasoning since pioneer times, and every busy farm wife had a little garden bed or potted herbs in a sunny corner for ready availability. Unfortunately the practice of home-grown herbs declined with the advent of supermarkets. Today many cooks are discovering the pleasure of propagating their own herbs – and the notable difference in taste and aroma with green leaves picked fresh from the garden.

Storage. To have herbs retain freshness for about a week in the refrigerator, place the herbs stem side down in a glass of water. Cover with a plastic bag and secure the bag with a rubber band. Change the water every 2 or 3 days. Just before using, wash and pat dry with paper towels.

Zeus, God of Gods

ANCIENT GREEKS conferred over one hundred twenty-five names on Zeus to express his dizzying complexity. The supreme god, he ruled Mount Olympus and the sky itself, hurling lightning and thunderbolts as the mood prevailed. Zeus reigned over the mortal world as well. Beloved and awe-inspiring as the archetypal Greek god he was called Panhellenios, Zeus of all the Hellenes.

Cults and temples dedicated to all such epithets flourished from Asia Minor to Sicily, often differing widely in rituals. But always and everywhere worshipers sacrificed white animals on raised altars.

A sect in Dodona centered around a sacred oak. The tree oracle was maintained by priestess "doves," who fluttered to the ground and received divinations from the rustling leaves. In Arcadia two wildly dissimilar Zeus cults arose through semantic confusion. In this woodsy back-of-the-world spot Zeus was also known as Lykaios, "brightness," a reference to the brilliance of the lightning and thunder god. Here Zeus presided over sacred Mt. Lykaios, "the bright mountain where no shadows are ever cast." But the root word "lyke" also applies to Lycaon, "the wolf man," whose ancient cannibalism was glorified by bizarre rites. According to Plato, a clan of devotees would gather on the mountain every eight years to make a sacrifice to Zeus Lycaon. Celebrants who ate a morsel of human flesh were said to turn into wolves and could only regain human form after eight years had passed by.

Olympian mythology abounds in other strange meals. At birth Zeus was spirited away from his Titan father, Cronos, because of a prophesy that he would be dethroned by a son. Supreme ruler of the gods, Cronos had already preventively swallowed his sons, Hades and Poseidon, at birth – then his daughters, Hera, Demeter and Hestia for good measure. Determined to save the new baby from the same culinary fate, his mother tricked Cronos into consuming a rock in swaddling clothes. She spirited

little Zeus to Crete, where the divine goat Amalthea suckled and raised him. In her honor Zeus created the cornucopia, the iconic Horn of Plenty, its Zeusly origin largely unrecognized as Thanksgiving decoration.

Grown to manhood, Zeus was determined to rescue his brothers and sisters. He forced Cronos to disgorge his bizarre fare, banished the Titans to "the land lower than the underworld," and seized power. Zeus drew lots to share the dynasty of the universe with his brothers; he won the heavens and the land; Poseidon, the sea; Hades, the underground world of shadows. With his siblings residing, Zeus established the pantheon on Mt. Olympus and married his sister Hera.

Hera, the Ox-Eyed Queen of Heaven, goddess of marriage and birth, was adored by women. She blessed weddings and served as the archetype of sexual union in the marriage bed. The divine couple had three children, but oddly enough in view of her procreative guise some accounts dispute Zeus's aid in their conception. Female devotees believed the babies were engendered simply by eating lettuce or by Hera slapping her hand on the Earth, a solemnizing gesture to the Greeks.

I wish I could report that Hera found Zeus an exemplary husband, as befitted the most majestic of gods, but in this role he was sadly, sadly flawed – perhaps to provide a comforting reflection of mortal weakness. His affairs were constant and sometimes weirdly creative seductions among goddesses, mortals, and especially the surpassingly lovely nymphs. From these adulteries arose scores of children, some to become deities, others heroes or heroines.

British rhyming slang terms "wife" as "storm and strife," descriptive of Hera's marriage to the God of Thunder. Since Zeus was too powerful for her to punish, Hera exacted revenge on her husband's lovers, including those seduced by force or trickery. She began by polishing off the nymph Echo, charged by Zeus to chatter and distract his vigilant wife when he was making love elsewhere. When Hera realized the deception, she cursed Echo by causing her to speak only the words of others. Ashamed of her impairment, Echo hides in woods and valleys, still to be encountered.

When Hera discovered Zeus's affair with Semele, the goddess pretended to befriend the Theban

princess. Semele confided that her unseen husband was actually Zeus. Hera scoffed and instilled doubt in Semele, who demanded that Zeus show himself. He warned her that death awaited mortals who looked on gods. Devoured by curiosity, Semele insisted. Zeus displayed himself in a blaze of all his divine glory amid thunder and lightning. The princess perished.

And poor Io. As Zeus was dallying with her, to hide from Hera he sent a blanket of thick clouds over the world. But the odd weather just aroused her suspicions. Hera dispersed the clouds and began to zero in on the couple. Zeus hastily transformed the maiden into a lovely white heifer. Asked by Hera where the heifer came from, Zeus protested that he had never seen her before, the animal had just sprung up from the earth. Puzzled but still suspicious, Hera demanded the beautiful creature as a present. Zeus could hardly refuse. Then the goddess sent a gadfly to torment the heifer to such madness that she fled blindly throughout the world.

Oddly enough, the two most famous seductions remained unpunished. The Phoenician princess Europa resisted Zeus's advances, and to have his way the deity disguised himself among her father's herds as a marvelous white bull, fragrant and lowing melodiously. She petted the animal and hung him with garlands "until the princess dared to mount his back, her pet bull's back, unwitting whom she rode," according to Ovid. Instantly the bull ran off and plunged into the sea, followed by Nereids riding dolphins and Triton blowing his horn. The terrified Europa realized that the bull was a god. Landing on Crete, Zeus revealed himself, offered his love and promised her many famous sons. In honor of Europa Zeus created a bull of stars in the sky, the constellation Taurus. When he seduced the Spartan queen Leda, ever-resourceful Zeus assumed the form of a swan, enveloping her in his soft, snowy wings. From this improbable union she produced a large egg which hatched into two sets of twins; one of the daughters became the exquisite Helen of Troy, "the face that launched a thousand ships."

The marriage of the King and Queen of Mount Olympus was virtually made in heaven, but it was fraught with trickery and doubtless the witty Greeks enjoyed the scandalous aspects of their union. Nonetheless Zeus was the most revered of the celestial gods. As for Hera, a Homeric hymn glorifies the Queen of Gods:

I sing of golden-throned Hera,
whom Rhea bore,
Queen of the Immortals is she,
surpassing all in beauty:

She is the sister and the wife
of loud-thundering Zeus,
the glorious one
whom all the blessed
throughout high Olympus
reverence and honor
even as Zeus who delights
in thunder.

– Barbara Stacy

The Frog Prince

IN OLDEN TIMES, when to wish was to have, there lived a king whose daughters were all lovely, but the youngest was so fair that even the sun itself was enchanted by her beauty each time it shone upon her.

Near the royal castle there was a great dark wood, and in its midst grew an old oak tree whose branches shaded a deep pool of fresh spring water. When the day was hot, the youngest princess liked to sit beside the pool and play with her golden ball. Tossing it high in the air and catching it again was her favorite game.

Now it happened one day that the golden ball escaped her hand, dropped to the ground, and rolled into the water. The child saw it disappear in the pool, which was so deep that the bottom could not be seen. In misery, the princess began to weep, and she wept and wept as if she could never be comforted.

And as she sobbed, a voice called out to her, "Why do you weep, little princess? Your tears would melt a heart of stone." She looked around to see who had spoken and saw a frog stretching his thick ugly head out of the water. "Oh, is it you that spoke, old water-paddler?" said she. "I'm crying for my golden ball which has fallen into the pool." "Never mind. Stop crying," said the frog. "What will you give me if I fetch up your plaything?" "Whatever you like, dear frog," she answered, "my gowns, my pearls and jewels, or the golden crown I wear."

"Gowns, jewels, or golden crowns are not for me: but if you will love me and let me be your companion and playmate, sit at your table, and eat from your little gold plate, drink from your cup, and sleep in your little bed – if you will promise me all these, I will dive down and fetch up your golden ball." "Oh yes!" the princess answered at once. "I promise it all, whatever you want, if only you will bring back my ball." But she thought to herself, "What nonsense. As if he could do anything but stay in the water with the other frogs." The frog, as soon as he heard her promise,

dived to the deepest part of the spring and soon emerged with the golden ball in his mouth. Then he tossed it on the bank.

The princess was overjoyed to see her beautiful plaything again. She caught it up, and ran off without a second thought. "Wait, stop!" cried the frog. "Take me with you. I cannot run as fast as you." But his croaking was useless, for the princess had forgotten all about the poor frog.

The next day, when the princess was sitting at the table with the king and all the court and was eating from her little gold plate, something was heard coming pitter-patter up the marble stairs, and then there came a knocking at the door and a voice crying, "King's youngest daughter, let me in." She rose and went to see who it could be, but when she opened the door, there was the frog looking up at her. The princess quickly shut the door and returned to the table in great dismay.

The king noticed her beating heart and said, "My child, why are you frightened? Is there a giant at the door ready to carry you away?" "Oh no," she answered, "not a giant but an ugly frog." "What does the frog want with you?" asked the king.

"Oh, dear father, yesterday my golden ball fell into the water and the frog dived down and brought it up to me on the condition that I would let him be my companion. I never thought he could leave the pool and come after me, but now he is outside the door and wants to come in to me."

At that moment there was another knock, and a voice called:

"King's youngest daughter,
open the door,
that I may come in
and go on no more.
Have you forgotten
the vows you made,
by the woodland pool
in the oak tree's shade?"

"You have made a promise, and you must keep it," said the king. "Go at once and let him in." So she went and opened the door, and the frog hopped in after her, following at her heels till she reached her chair, and as soon as she was seated, the frog said, "Lift me up to sit by you." But the princess hesitated so long that finally the king ordered her to obey. When once the frog was on the chair, he wanted to

get on the table, and there he sat and said, "Now push your golden plate near me so that we may eat together." And she did so, but as everybody saw, most unwillingly. The frog relished his dinner, but every morsel seemed to stick in the throat of the princess. At last the frog said, "I'm satisfied, but I feel very tired; now you must carry me to your room and make ready the silken bed that we may lie down and sleep." At this speech the princess began to cry, but her tears only made her father angry, for he declared: "What you have promised to do in your time of need, you must now perform." So she picked up the frog with her thumb and forefinger, and carried him to her room, and set him down in a corner. But no sooner was she in bed then the frog came hopping across the rug, saying, "I am tired and I want to sleep as much as you. Take me up or I will tell your father." The princess had no alternative but to obey. With a shudder, she placed the frog on the bed, but when she laid her head back on the pillow, the cold and clammy creature tumbled against her cheek.

All patience left her, and in a towering rage she flung him with all her might against the wall, crying, "Now will you leave me alone, you horrid frog!" But as he fell, he ceased to be a frog and became all at once a handsome prince with kind and grateful eyes.

"Who are you? And where is the frog?" cried the princess.

"An evil fairy enchanted me by her spells and changed me into a frog," said the prince, "and as such I was fated to remain until a princess let me eat from her plate and rest on her pillow. The wicked spell is broken. And now will you marry me and go with me to my father's kingdom? I will love you and be good to you as long as I live." The young princess, you may be sure, was not long in giving her consent; and as they spoke, a splendid carriage drawn by eight white horses decked with white ostrich plumes and harnessed in gold traces drove into the courtyard.

With her father's consent, the happy couple set out for the prince's kingdom, where they arrived safely and lived happily a great many years.

– The Brothers Grimm

Naming Serpents of the Wind

"Hopefully it will appease the gods," said the resident of a century-old home in Pensacola, Florida, shortly after a passing hurricane had brought more fear than fury to the neighborhood. She was expressing relief as well as amazement. For some mysterious reason a threatening hurricane had made an unexpected – and lucky – swerve at the very last moment. Such storms are unpredictable, their erratic tracks as confusing as the terms that describe them. These violent weather systems generally are familiar to us as hurricanes, and their near relatives, the frenzied whirling funnels, are known as typhoons or cyclones.

Whatever the terminology in various parts of the world, ferocious storms of this nature arise similarly. Convergence of various factors create a swirl of counterclockwise winds that first become a tropical depression, then may escalate into a tropical storm. As the winds intensify an eye appears, staring skyward, in the center of tightly curled clouds. Once wind speed exceeds 74 miles per hour, it attains hurricane status. A mature hurricane almost always forms a symmetrical circle. Its activity spans from one to 30 days and often extends over a five-hundred-mile area. Cold water can weaken hurricanes and they also decline quickly over land, especially if they encounter mountains. Hurricanes have distinct personalities, some meandering as if consciously following a mysterious personal agenda.

Naming storms dates back at least several hundred years, when hurricanes in the West Indies were named after they developed on a particular saint's day. On July 26, 1825, a ferocious storm was called Hurricane Santa Ana because it had struck Puerto Rico on Saint Anne's Day. In the nineteenth century an Australian meteorologist, Clement Wragg, began giving storms women's names. Soon other weather forecasters used the practice to distinguish references to particular storms. In 1953 the U.S. created an official list of female names to identify hurricanes, and by 1978 alternating male names were added.

The term "hurricane" derives from Hurakan, a Mayan god. When the world was very young, the Mayans taught, Hurakan blew his breath on chaotic waters to reveal dry land. Later Hurakan became angry at the first human beings and unleashed a destructive deluge.

The Mayan legend reflects the pervasive tradition of Great Flood stories. Hurakan's name means One Legged, and people of the Caribbean saw him as a rather evil deity. A divine creator, he ruled fire as well as water. In scattered areas of the world a variety of spellings for the word "hurricane" turn up, including *furicano*, *haracana*, *jimmycane* and *oracuan*. The term "cyclone" is used for the conical storm thanks to Henry Piddington, a sea captain. The rough weather of the Indian Ocean intrigued Piddington, and in 1789 he witnessed a violent tropical storm that killed more than 20,000 people of coastal Coringa, India. Captain Piddington coined the term in his presentation about storms to the Asiatic Society in Bengal. The word derives from the Greek *kykon*, which means circling, in the sense of coiling like a snake. In his book *The Sailor's Horn-Book for the Law of Storms*, Piddington included wind arrows suggestive of a snake's undulating movements for charting a course out of harm's way. "Cyclone" gained broader usage, and by the 1850's referred to the kind of storms we now call "tornadoes" in the Midwest. Although the storm in *The Wizard of Oz* was called a "cyclone,, today only the tropical storms of the Indian Ocean are still referred to by that term.

Along the coast of China and in the western Pacific, the dreaded tropical storms are known as "typhoons." The name may derive from two Cantonese words, *tu*, "big," and *feng*, "wind." But as far back as 1555 the Greek word for a whirlwind, *tiphon*, was used by visitors to the Far East when they encountered these extreme storms. And oddly enough "typhoon" is a coincidence, combining the similar sounds of the two languages. Regardless of what they are called, tropical storms have enormous presence and potency, whirling like frenzied serpents along their journeys to destruction.

Mistletoe for storm protection

Witches who dwell in coastal areas have long used weather sorcery to placate and redirect howling winds. A favored method relies on mistletoe, one of the most mysterious, magical and sacred of plants. A bundle of mistletoe hanging indoors provides a robust talisman against storm damage. To preserve its power, the plant must be plucked without a blade and never allowed to touch the ground. Hang fresh mistletoe high at Yuletide, leave for the year, then toss it on the hearth fire while giving thanks for its protection. Replace with a freshly gathered bundle at once.

– Dikki-Jo Mullen

the fixed stars

ACHERNAR — The magical lore of stars is prominent in the universe of the witch and mystic. Rituals involving the invocation of stars and their accompanying spirits have been observed since earliest times. Astrologers note that certain stars have an impact when conjoined with planets or when they are rising on the ascendant or posed at the mid-heaven of a horoscope. Subtle and distant as their energy fields might be, "fixed stars" have influence. The term itself is a misnomer, for nothing in the sky is static. Certain stars do indeed move, but at such a slow rate that the motion is barely perceptible over the span of a century. Some conjoining stars bring a dire message, others foreshadow blessings. Often the energy of a star is skewed, depending upon the planet with which it links.

September 7, 2006, offers an opportunity to observe the influences of a fixed star and learn from its message. The lunar eclipse that day, at 2:41 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, means that any planets from 11 to 18 degrees of Pisces will be impacted by the fixed star Achernar. This promises to bring an especially strong energy directly linked to the star's influence during the year to come.

Achernar's emblems are the sword and the cherub. A bright blue-white star of the second magnitude, it is located in a constellation called Alpha Eidanus, or The Mouth of the River Eridani. Achernar is linked to the qualities of benevolent Jupiter, a traditional ruler of Pisces. It stimulates justice, gives an expanded vision of whole issues, high aspirations, and social consciousness. When well aspected by the Sun or natal Jupiter, Achernar promises rewards for outstanding work, patience, optimism and a good education. Success in contact with the general public, a focus on religion and philosophy, gain in business, even long-lasting fame have been related to the power of this star.

In the world overall, new business trends and spiritual awakening as well as a stronger sense of goodwill can prevail while Achernar is active. Since the eclipse occurs with the North Node, the positive potentials should be even more pronounced. The impending impact of an eclipse is hinted at during ninety days before the event. To prepare for the influence of Achernar, be alert to trends and opportunities presenting themselves beginning the second week in June. Just as water ripples when a stone is cast upon it, the intense energy of an eclipse has an after-shock effect also. Differing opinions exist, but as a

general rule the impact of an eclipse unfolds during the year following the event. This means that the energy of the fixed star Achernar will have an impact until the autumn of 2007.

Especially strong during the Full or New Moons, eclipses have long been celebrated in ritual circles. Wiccans often meet for esbats, a kind of semi-monthly coven business meeting, at the lunation. The term "esbat" derives from a French term for "frolic." This hints that esbats have a joyous energy, with plenty of food and music to enjoy once the business is accomplished. Drawing upon inner guidance, Achernar and the Full Moon can be honored either on the evening of the eclipse or the night before. Dedicate a ceremony to Jove and the Sun.

– DIKKI-JO MULLEN

The Northern Hemisphere of the Celestial Globe Johann Stadium, 1497

In the corners are four astronomers: Aratus Cilis, Ptolomaeus Aegyptius, Manilius Romanus, Azophi Arabus.

Bird Auguries

"THOSE LITTLE nimble musicians of the air that warble forth their curious ditties," as Izaak Walton describes birds, may be according us more than their familiar enchantment. They sing, our spirits dance. But to the ancients the song of birds, along with the direction of flights, their numbers, their very aspects, spoke volumes as well as sang songs. Birds have flown into magic and mythology all over the world, often recognized for their portentous nature.

The most highly developed system of divination evolved in Rome, and by 300 B.C. fifteen augurs, some patricians, some plebeians, officially observed bird omens. The objective was not so much to detect the future, but to provide a line of action for the state. Augurs donned ceremonial togas and climbed to elevated places, carrying staffs. They made sacrifices and prayed. Then the seers gazed skyward, awaiting avian events. In what direction the birds appeared was noted, as well as the manner of flight and vanishing point. From such particulars as well as birdsong, portents derived.

Flight to the east was a good omen, flight to the west unpropitious. Beware if the bird flew back and forth low to the ground. Horizontal flight indicated a purpose to be revealed. A very active bird pointed out that strong action was needed. Birds helped people, especially heroines, in many folk tales, but sometimes the creatures caused mischief – various cultures begat various interpretations. Stories turn up everywhere of people transformed into birds, and many countries have accounts of shamans and witches shape-shifting into birds, especially ravens and geese. Tradition has it that some people's souls pass into birds when they die; kings and sailors are especially prone to such reincarnation.

According to a Chinese proverb, "A bird does not sing because it has an answer, it sings because it has a song." Nonetheless, there follow specifics about our feathery oracles, some beliefs largely lost in time, some still prevailing.

Chickens. The ancient Romans had a flock of revelatory chickens kept especially for that purpose. Just before sunrise the *pullarius* fed the birds in strict silence. If the chickens evinced no appetite, the omen was dire. But if the birds in their greed dropped grains from their beaks, and especially if the grains rebounded from the ground, the augury was favorable.

Crows. The sleek black birds in one's vicinity generally presaged ill fortune, and in some circumstances the harm was predictable. If crows croaked and circled three times around a field, for instance, the

farmer could expect heavy losses in flocks and herds. The most drastic – a crow hovering overhead foretold decapitation. But crow auguries are not all evil. The Welsh say, "Two crows I see, good luck to me." And a wedding is in the offing when two crows fly over a house.

Cuckoos. Especially welcome birdsong. Hearing the first cuckoo of the season brings good luck for the rest of the season.

Dove. The bird's gleaming plumage is always a harbinger of peace and good news. The dove that perched on the Ark disclosed to Noah that land was near. Historical bystanders attest that a dove hovered around Joan of Arc's banner as she rode into battle, an omen of success. If a dove is heard cooing in the woods, it warns against thieves.

Eagles. In Wales eagles are considered "the king of birds" and endowed with mystical powers. Several caverns believed to be the resting place of King Arthur were guarded by chained eagles. The site required protection, as Welsh mystics claim that the king will return to usher Britain into a Golden Age. Eagles build nests on the crags of the great mountains, and on Mount Snowdon sacred eagles screamed and prophesied from the summit. The Welsh believed that whirlwinds were caused by these sacred eagles as they flapped their huge wings preparing for flight. In high winds the Welsh still say that the "eagles are breeding whirlwinds on Snowdon." If a person dared to eat the meat of an eagle, his descendants down to the ninth generation would have second sight. Some believe that robbers stealing eggs from an eagle's nest would be deprived of repose forever. The birds often were portents of other dire fortune. An eagle's cry foretold calamity, and appearing over a plain foretold death.

Geese. Flights of migratory geese augur travel or news. Viewed flying toward the moon, geese are heralds of loneliness or news of death.

Magpies. For magpies especially, numbers feature in prognostication. One magpie alone predicted bad luck, two alerted the viewer to new love or friendship. An old adage declares, "One for sorrow, two for mirth, three for a wedding, four for a birth."

Owls. The Romans considered the owl a bird of ill omen, especially if seen in the city and especially during the day. Pliny informs us that on one occasion "a horned owl entered the very sanctuary of the Capitol in consequence of which Rome was purified on the nones of March." In places owls were similarly considered bad news, harbingers of sorrow and death, their hooting heard with dread. In Wales, the hooting owl in the midst of houses disclosed

that a girl was on the very brink of losing her virginity. In one place they say, "When an owl hooted from one of the yews in the churchyard, some unmarried girl from the village of Llangynwyd had forsaken the path of chastity."

Ravens. Generally regarded as an evil omen. American Indians believe that the raven is "the messenger of death," and other traditions have it that a raven flying around the chimney foreshadows illness. In Britain, they believe that if the eggs are stolen a baby will die. In Yorkshire children are warned that if they misbehave "the great black bird" will carry them off. A famous flock of ravens nest at the Tower of London, and the tradition holds that if the birds fly off the monarchy will fall. The opening lines of Edgar Allen Poe's marvelous poem, "Once upon a midnight dreary," sets the stage for the entrance of the famous "bird of melancholy." On the positive side, if you see a raven preening you can grab an umbrella and protect yourself from the rain to come. And if a blind person is kind to a raven, tradition assures us, sight will be restored.

Robins. Spring harbingers, robins predict the weather with their song. Make a quick wish on spotting the first of the season – if the robin flies away before you wish, no luck will follow for the next twelve months. When a robin sings from a bush, foul weather follows. When the bird sings from a barn, warm weather is in store. It is unlucky to kill a robin; the hand that does so will shake ever after. It is also a widespread belief that if you harm a robin, you will suffer in the same way – breaking its eggs ensures that something valuable of yours will be broken. Legend has it that the robin received its lovely red breast feathers from scorching as it took water into Hell to ease the pain of burning sinners. And beware of imprisoning a robin. William Blake offers another famous poetic bird: "A Robin Redbreast in a Cage/Puts all Heaven in a Rage."

Roosters. The rooster has always been associated with magic. Tradition has it that at cock crow all restless spirits roaming the earth depart to their dismal abodes. If a rooster crows at night, there will be betrayal among friends.

Seagulls. Flying far inland, the seagull warns of a tempest at sea. One seagull flying alone heralds bad news.

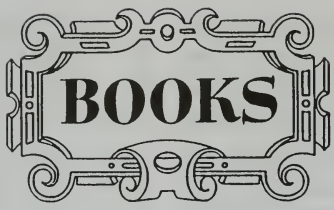
Sparrows. The sparrow symbolizes the gods of the household and family, and is to be nurtured. The bird is especially associated with St. Valentine's Day. A tradition tells us that a girl will marry according to the first bird she sees on the morning of February 14th. If it is a sparrow, she will wed a farmer. Thoreau loved the bird: "I once had a sparrow alight

on my shoulder for a moment, while I was hoeing in a village garden, and I felt that I was more distinguished by that circumstance than I should have been by any epaulet I could have worn."

Swallows. Swallows rank slightly below eagles as dire auguries, and especially for farmers – poor returns for frequent barn hospitality. Flying high the swallows augur a drought.

Let's think about some birds metaphorical and metaphysical. From the pen of the New England essayist Henry Ward Beecher: "There are joys which long to be ours. God sends ten thousand truths, which come about us like birds seeking inlet; but we are shut up to them, and so they bring us nothing, but sit and sing awhile upon the roof, and then fly away."

– Barbara Stacy



J.K. Rowling Waves a Wand

Access to Rowling's web site brings you to her virtual desktop, replete with notebook, diary, pens, coffee cup, newspapers, gum wrappers. Clicking on each feature introduces another aspect of her astounding story – the dazzling success of the Harry Potter books, the dizzying rise from rags to riches. The plots have established a beloved alternative universe drawn with charm, imagination and wit. As for her reference to witchcraft practices, Rowling gets it right. If you access the "Miscellaneous" section of the site, for instance, you encounter "Wands." Rowling's meticulous attention to what wood served best for each character's wand reveals the integrity of her work. And the fun – the rods may include unicorn hairs, phoenix feathers, or dragon heartstrings.

There follows Rowling's website musings on wands and her transformation of factual material into magical fiction for Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone.

Wands

"I gave Harry a wand made of holly wood back in 1990, when I first drafted chapter six of *'Philosopher's Stone.'* It was not an arbitrary decision: holly has certain connotations that were perfect for Harry, particularly when contrasted with the traditional associations of yew, from which Voldemort's wand is made. European tradition has it that the holly tree (the name comes from 'holy') repels evil, while yew, which can achieve astonishing longevity (there are British yew trees over two thousand years old), can symbolise both death and resurrection; the sap is also poisonous.

"Some time after I had given Harry his holly-and-phoenix wand I came across a description of how the Celts had assigned trees to different parts of the year and discovered that, entirely by coincidence, I had assigned Harry the 'correct' wood for his day of birth. I therefore decided to give Ron and Hermione Celtic wand woods, too. Ron, who was born in the February 18 – March 17 period, was given an ash wand (I think I had originally marked him down for beech), and Hermione, who was born between September 2 and September 29, received a vine wood wand (I can't remember what I originally stipulated for Hermione; possibly I had not specified a wood for her at that stage).

"I have only used the Celtic assignations for Ron and Hermione. Hagrid, for instance, has an oak wand, though by this Celtic system he should have a wand made of elder; in Britain, the oak is 'King of the Forest' and fecundity; what other wood could 'choose' Hagrid? In any case, I liked the connection between Harry, Ron and Hermione's wands that only I knew about (until now, anyway)."

(Rowling follows this excerpt with a Celtic tree chart.)

Wand shopping in Diagon Alley

Harry and Hagrid wandered into a shop designated "Ollivanders: Makers of Fine Wands since 382 B.C." The old owner told Harry that his mother bought her first wand there, "Ten and a quarter inches long, swishy, made of willow. Nice wand for charm work." His father, on the other hand, favored mahogany. "Pliable. A little more power and excellent for transfiguration. Well, I say your father favored it? It's really the wand that chooses the wizard, of course."

Mr. Ollivander touched the scar on Harry's forehead. "I'm sorry to say I sold the wand that did it," he said softly. "Thirteen-and-a-half inches. Yew. Powerful wand, very powerful, and in the wrong hands, well, if I'd known what that wand was going out into the world to do – "

He greeted Rubeus Hagrid and remembered the giant's wand, oak, sixteen inches, rather bendy. Then Mr. Ollivander measured Harry from shoulder to finger, wrist to elbow, shoulder to floor, knee to armpit and round his head. He explained that every wand has a core of magical substance. "No two Ollivander wands are the same," he assured Harry. "And of course, you will never get such good results with another wizard's wand." Mr. Ollivander offered Harry a wand of beechwood and dragon heartstring, nine inches, flexible. "Just take it and give it a wave."

Mr. Ollivander snatched it out of Harry's hand almost at once. "Maple and phoenix feather. Seven inches. Quite whippy. Try." Harry tries, but he had hardly raised the wand when it, too, was snatched back by Mr. Ollivander. "No, no, here, ebony and unicorn hair, eight-and-a-half inches, springy. Go on, go on, try it out."

The boy tried a mounting pile of wands. "Tricky customer, eh? Not to worry, we'll find the perfect match here somewhere. I wonder, now, yes, why not, unusual combination, holly and phoenix feather, eleven inches, nice and supple."

A difference here. "Harry took the wand. He felt a sudden warmth in his fingers. He raised the wand above his head, brought it swishing down through the dusty air and a stream of red and gold sparks shot from the end like a firework, throwing dancing spots of light on to the walls. Hagrid whooped and clapped and Mr. Ollivander cried, 'Oh, bravo! Yes, indeed, oh, very good.' "

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Editor: Could you tell me where I could get a true copy of the Emerald Tablet *attributed to Hermes Treismegistus that brings honor to the god Thoth? Also, is there a Witches' Almanac for the year 1945? If not, then how can I find out what position the moon was in on September 2 of that year?*

Thank you for being there.

C.L.E.
Nashua, NH

Dear C.L.E.: Several editions of the *Emerald Tablet* are available online; www.sacred-texts.com/alc/emerald.html has a number of them. For print, I would suggest the 1905 edition, *Thrice Greatest Hermes*, by G.R.S. Mead, reissued in a single volume by Weiser Books in 2001.

The moon moved into Cancer on that date, as well as being in the constellation of Cancer. You can find the position of any planet, including sun and moon, by consulting an ephemera for the appropriate year. An ephemera is a daily listing of the zodiac positions of the planets. We recommend *The American Ephemera for the 21st Century 2000-2050 at Midnight* for dates after 2000 and *The American Ephemera for the 20th Century at Midnight* for previous dates, available at many local bookstores and online from a number of retailers.

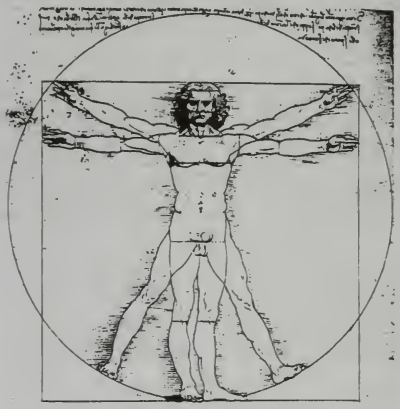
Dear Editor: I am a big fan of Dan Brown's book, The Da Vinci Code, *and a devoted follower of the works of Da Vinci himself. In your last issue of* The Witches' Almanac *you had an article about* The Da Vinci Code *along with an image of Vitruvius Man. Looking at the image I'm wondering if you didn't publish the image in reverse.*

Da Vinci used "mirror writing" (writing in the reverse direction that appears normal when it is reflected in a mirror). There are several theories as to why he did this. One theory is that Leonardo was left handed and the ink would smudge easily if he wrote in standard writing. Another theory is that he wanted to protect his ideas from being stolen, while yet another theory is that he wanted to hide his ideas from the Roman Catholic Church, whose scientific views collided with his own.

I think that the view you published is the mirror image of Vitruvius Man that reveals the text, with the subject's toes pointing to the left. I think that the actual version showed the mirror

(reverse) writing with the subject's toes pointing right. One finds both views in research, but the actual image as drawn by Da Vinci would have the toes pointing to the right.

Warm Regards,
M.B.
Anna Maria, Florida



Dear M.B.: Your version seems correct. We stumbled over our own toes on that one.

Dear Editor: I am a pagan, a follower of the goddess and a solitary eclectic witch. I take what "feels right" to me from various traditions and incorporate those into my life. I have a number of ailments and I am blind.

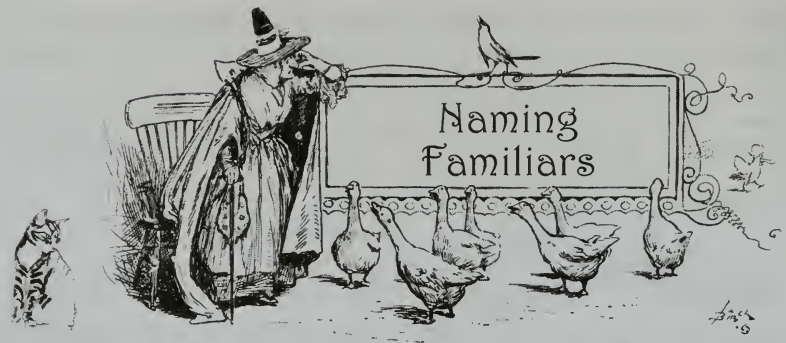
I resisted the call of the goddess for a long time, and gleaned bits and pieces of information wherever I could. There is virtually nothing available to me on tape, braille, or compact disc, and the software I used to read things with doesn't at present allow me to access much on the Internet. The goddess however keeps calling me, and I know deep within myself that I have always served her since before time, eternity or the universe began.

I am going to finish my degree in English Literature this September.

Ayesha
London, England

Dear Ayesha: Wherever the goddess leads, we wish you all happiness and a good life. As for books on tape, amberandjet@yahoogroups.com, "Taith" lets us know that anyone eligible for Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic, RFB&D, can contact Taith offline if they can't pony up the $100 fee to join. A variety of organizations can help with the registration fee.

"If you join RFB&D and NLS (National Library Services for the Blind and Handicapped), you can borrow a player from NLS for free and use it with cassette books from both groups instead of buying a player from RFB&D," according to Taith. "I feel lucky and mad that I started using these services before RFB&D went to a subscription service in the nineties. The least I can do is help others."



The familiar or animal companion to a witch is a dominant theme in the history of witchcraft. A small domesticated animal, most often a dog or a cat, was used for divining and working magic. In seventeenth-century England the naming of a familiar was an event important enough to call for an esbat — a meeting of the witches' coven. Some of the names the witches chose for their familiars have been culled from their trial records.

Amie	Hoult	Pigene	Sanders
Besse	Inges	Prettyman	Sathan
Collyn	Jacke	Priscill	Sparrow
Elimanzer	Jarmara	Puck	Susan
Elva	Jezebell	Pyewacket	Tewhit
Fancy	Lightfoot	Robert the Rule	Tibbe
Fillie	Littleman	Robin	Tom
George	Makeshift	Rorie	Tyffin
Gibbe	Makhector	Rug	Vinegar Tom
Grissel	Panu	Sack and Sugar	Wynowe

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WITCHCRAFT being by nature one of the secretive arts, it may not be as easy to find us next year. If you'd like to make sure we know where you are, why don't you send us your name and address? You will certainly hear from us.

The Rede of the Wiccae

Adriana Porter, Gwen Thompson and the Birth of a Tradition of Witchcraft

by Robert Mathiesen and Theitic

This is a tale told by Gwen Thompson about her grandmother, Adriana Porter, and how she came to be the last carrier of her ancestral Tradition of Witchcraft.

The information was researched by Robert Mathiesen, a medieval philologist and professor at Brown University, and Theitic, an Elder in the Tradition that Gwen Thompson founded.

A Closer Look at
The Rede of the Wiccae

◆

Investigating a Family Tradition of the Craft
Gwen Thompson's Grandmother Tale

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The course of Adriana Porter's life and her ancestors in Salem, 1692

What could Adriana Porter have known?
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Magic and the Occult Sciences in old New England

Bluenose Folk-Magic at Yarmouth

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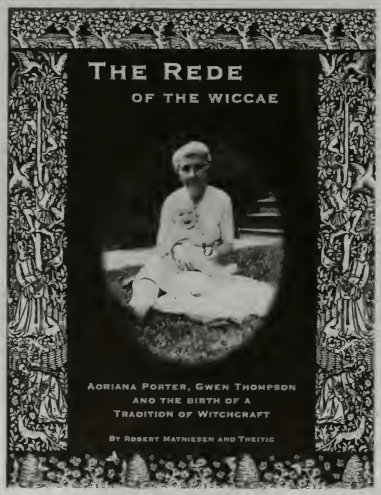
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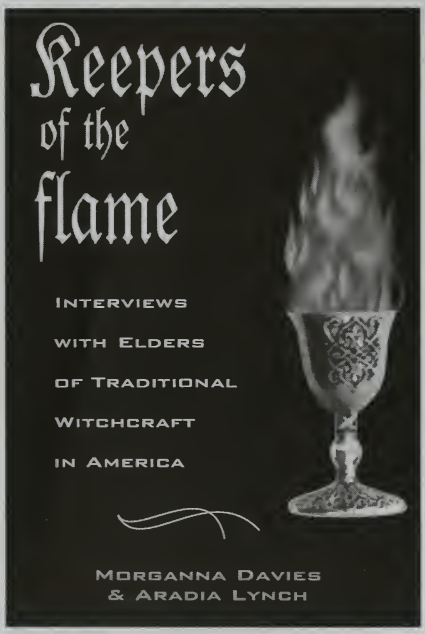
Keepers of the Flame

Interviews with Elders of Traditional Witchcraft in America

by Morganna Davies and Aradia Lynch



Many Traditional Witches have deliberately avoided all the fanfare and media hype that some who call themselves "witches" seem to covet. Some have preferred to remain anonymous, quietly practicing their Craft and passing the Tradition on to their students. These Elders are growing older and the torches are being passed to a new generation.

This book is not *about* the Elders, it is a record of their opinions, views, comments and ideas of what the Craft was, what it is today, and what they think it will be in the future.

Morganna Davies is an Alexandrian Priestess and was a member of one of the early covens in the United States. Aradia Lynch is a High Priestess of the New England Coven of Traditionalist Witches.

Including interviews with:

- Elizabeth Pepper, editor of *The Witches' Almanac* and *Witches All*
- Raymond Buckland, author of *The Complete Book of Witchcraft*
- Hanz Holzer, author, and a leading authority on psychic phenomena
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Koo Hollie & the Corn Goddess Chronicle

by Dikki-Jo Mullen

Welcome to Florida's
Star of the Sorceress School of Metaphysics.
Practical instruction in astrology, runes, aura reading, numerology, angel and faerie lore, ghost tracking, tea leaf fortunes, dream analysis, herbs, ritual magic and more is offered in this allegory.

When astrologer and parapsychologist Koo Hollie purchases a mysterious century-old Native American carving of a life-sized Corn Goddess statue, the adventure begins. From an ancient beach house on the Brevard County Space Coast to a cottage on Orlando's Lake Emerald, to the forgotten village of Uponthee near the Seminole Indian Reservation in the Everglades, adventure follows Koo in her efforts to save a neighborhood's endangered trees. The Corn Goddess and a very special grapefruit tree are enmeshed in this intriguing drama.

Koo Hollie and the Corn Goddess Chronicle is a signed and numbered limited edition book. Designed to become highly collectible, it combines an exciting story with an entire course in astrology and metaphysics adapted from astrologer and parapsychologist Dikki-Jo Mullen's classes and professional practice.

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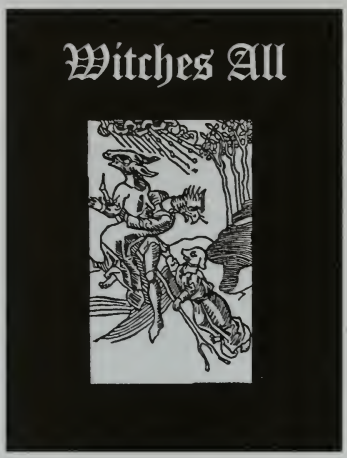

Perfect for study or casual reading, Witches All *is a collection from* The Witches' Almanac *publications of the past. Arranged by topics, the book, like the popular almanacs, is thought-provoking and often spurs me on to a tangent leading to even greater discovery.*

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Ty Bevington, Circle of the Wicker Man, Columbus, Ohio

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Tarot3, Willits, California

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